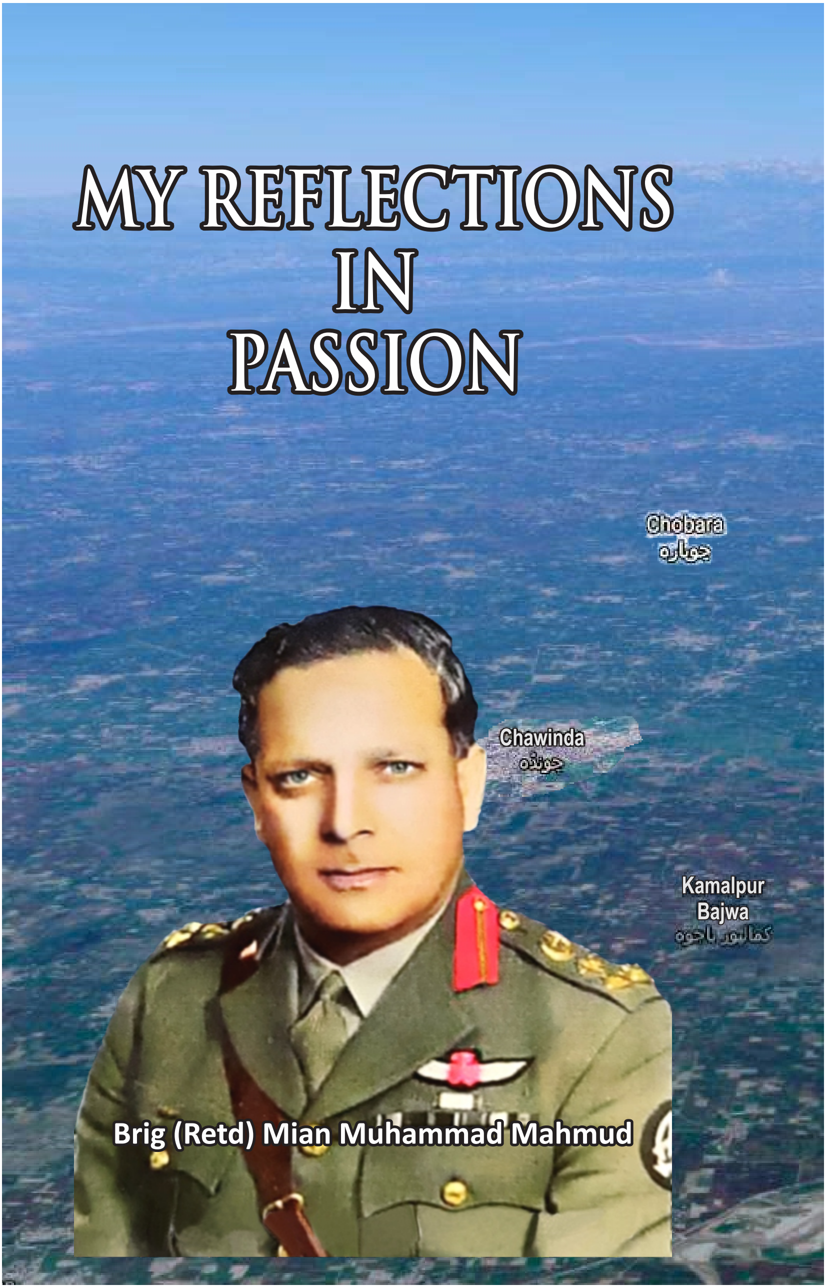
# MY REFLECTIONS IN PASSION



Chobara
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Chawinda
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Kamalpur
Bajwa
کمالپور باجوہ

**Brig (Retd) Mian Muhammad Mahmud**

# My Reflections
# in Passion

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Brigadier (Retd)
Mian Muhammad Mahmud

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**Mian Muhammad Mahmud**

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**TO**

**MY FAMILY AND IN PARTICULAR**

**MY LATE WIFE**

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# MY GRATITUDE

It was my late wife Omera Mahmud, who despite her serious sickness, kept fully supporting me and encouraging me to write this book. My sons Mian Akbar Mahmud and Humayun Mahmud Mian, their wives Mona and Zehra, and my grandchildren they all evinced keen interest in the completion of this task. In fact Fariseh, Malaika, Rahman, Hamza and Zariah Nur were always inquisitive to know when the book will be published. They must be all thrilled and excited that it has finally come to its conclusion.

# PREFACE

Having resigned rather early in my army career (and as a result no postings to any key appointments that could give me direct access to any inside information about the happenings in and around the corridors of power), I had no intention of writing my memoirs. I was one of the men stationed at the Chamb and Sialkot Sector during the War of 1965, and was quite aware of the situations and how the battles were fought. I had seen and watched the entire battle as it raged from the air, which gave a graphic account. My close links with the Army Command, at HQ 1 Corps, at the divisional and unit level, helped me get a vivid account of the operations as they developed; seen and observed by those on the ground. I have read most of the accounts compiled by different authors on both sides and remain adamant that many of these do not do justice to the historical facts. Instead, they are driven by some ideological motives; the distortions based in line with their own prejudices. It was this that encouraged me to compile my description of the war, which would truly reflect the events as witnessed both from the air and the ground.

During the period in which I was writing this account, I got in touch with my colleagues and close friends like Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar, Major General (Retd) Abdullah Malik, Lieutenant General (Retd) Safdar Butt, who were privy to important details and happenings, and impressed on them to plan and write, a more holistic account of these historical events so that these details too could be preserved, lest they are distorted. Unfortunately, they did not do so, and all passed away. It was at this stage that I included all the thoughts and information that they had shared with me. This wasthe period when my wife, Omera, was fighting a battle with cancer. Despite her illness, she would still encourage me to continue my writing, but I could not find the heart and the time to make much effort.

I edited my account of 1965 War and had copies of it circulated to everyone I knew who had actually taken part in these Sectors. After having done so, I called a meeting at my house in order to review the narrative that I had written. To my delight, everyone unanimously agreed to the authenticity of my account. The meeting also provided me the opportunity to listen to the experiences of the people present and incorporate the details and incidents that they had witnessed into my script.

I had also sent this account to Lieutenant General (Retd) Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan. He was kind enough to call me one day, telling me that though he could not read it himself due to his poor eyesight, he had the complete account read out loud to him and asked me to discuss this with him in person. When I met him, he was very gracious enough to tell me he fully subscribed to what I had written, and had no disagreements. I had criticized him for some decisions taken by him as Deputy Corps Commander, or the lack of it with not launching the Strike Force (of which he had been made the Commander). He, however, raised no objections to this; to me, it reflected his strength of character, and I have immense admiration for that.

My wife died on April 24, 2014. It was one of the most heartbreaking moments of my life, but with time, I have realized that I have to live with this, as it is the will of God Almighty. When I gathered myself, my thoughts went towards completing the job I had begun and returned to writing my memoirs. These have now been completed as this book, and I hope that they serve the purpose of enlightening the readers to the truth behind some of these historical events.

Since these are the reflections of what I look back at the entire span of my life, some events had a significant remembrance and are deeply entrenched in my mind, and some have been repeated. They have been contrived to bring out the special emphasis and significance that they demand. Also in the compiling of the narrative, particularly the period of our stay at the Academy, I have taken some extracts of a brief history compiled by the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, and given to me. I am grateful to them. I have taken the Annexures from the account of History of Indo-Pakistan War 1965, compiled by Lieutenant General (Retd) Mahmud Ahmad, and I thank the authorities for taking the liberty to use those to bring out trails of the operations.

In giving my views and comments, I may have been blunt but tried to compile an unbiased view of these events. If in this process, I have impinged on someone’s personal feelings and have hurt them; I offer my apologies. I have also strongly reflected on performing of the higher Command in the Army, but this stems from my firm belief that this Country has wonderful Armed Forces, which are led admirably by its junior officers, only to be let down by some senior officers in Command at different echelons. It is this weakness which needs to be addressed foremost. I had made these observations to a serving Corps Commander, who remarked, “You termed these young officers as excellent. It is we who had earlier served this Army in those ranks. We have now risen to these higher ranks, but this should not change our performance. In addition, we have experienced a prolonged action against the terrorists for the last many years; this is how this Army has grown and been baptized.” In all honesty, we can only hope that this is true. If the Army can get the good leadership that it deserves, then it is a big step forward in its battle worthiness. The history of Pakistan is a sordid trail of betrayals. After the untimely death of the Quaid and Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan, no leadership, both Civil and Military, served the cause and the purpose of the country. It has all been about self-serving policies ever since. But one needs to remain hopeful and have faith in the citizens of this country, who have tremendous potential and talent, to steer it away from the wreck to which it has been pushed, and embark on the path of progress and prosperity envisioned by our founding fathers. New dynamic leadership will emerge and restore the faith and hope with which this country was created with the blessings of the Allah (SWT). With the prayers that He may continue to guide us to find our moorings and put us back on the path of our destiny.

**Brig (Retd) Mian Muhammad Mahmud**

# Chapter 1

# RANDOM THOUGHTS

In reflection, when I look back at the events as they occurred in my life, some stand out most prominently.

Here, I may start with some random thoughts that have remained embedded in my mind. These are the great betrayals that have chartered our destiny. These may adequately sum up the feeling of frustrations piled up by the deeds of a few people critical to our decision making. Equally, my thoughts go to how we want to distort history to make a case of one‘s own aggrandizement. These few thoughts abruptly come to mind and I narrate those.

The first flashback is a very brief account of 1965 War. We, the young generation, had the will and the spirit to act. We had joined the Army all imbibed with the spirit with which this country had been created and wanted the same to be enthused in our new life. We lived and served with that. It was only the incompetent leadership, who worked only to preserve their personal interests, which destroyed the opportunities offered. I speak this earnestly and impartially, and in doing so seek no personal glory or recognition, my intention is only to illustrate how I have tried to model myself on my fundamental principles. We fought with dignity and honour and served valiantly to safeguard the country, even at the peril of our life, that we had sworn to protect, only to be let down by a self-serving minority hell bent on protecting their interests.

I took part in the 1965 War, first at Rann of Kutch, where Major General (later General) Tikka Khan was in command. Then I moved to the Chamb Operation on August 30, 1965 under both Major General (Later Lieutenant General) Akhtar Ali Malik and Major General (Later General) M. Yahya Khan. On September 6, 1965, the Number 1 Army Aviation Squadron, of which I was commanding officer, was re- allocated to provide support to the Sialkot sector. The squadron remained committed in that area till the ceasefire. I worked very closely with 12 Division and 7 Division in Chamb Operations, and 15th Division, 6 Armored Division and Headquarter 1 Corps, in the Sialkot Sector. It was there that I encountered Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana; whose professional incompetence and lack of any vision were very adversely affecting the performance of the army. Having contacts in at all levels of higher Army high command enabled me to observe this up close. It was clearly a story of serving ones personal interests at the costs of those of the Army and the Country! Watching this invoked in me a new sense of duty and purpose, which was free of any personal inhibitions, triggered only by the passion that I had for this country. Such was the intensity of my frustration and indignation that any inhibitions that I previously might have had vanished and left me with a sense of freedom that I had previously not felt. So I began to vent my feelings and share my views with my contacts within the top tier of the military hierarchy freely. This remained with me for my entire career and the subsequent part of life. I was more committed to the truth than I was to any self-serving agenda, such was (and remains) my faith in the power and utility of the truth. However, doubts had surfaced; questions emerged about the professional competence of some top brass of the army.

Questions also emerged as to if there was some hidden agenda in the whole conduct of the War as was being pursued by the brave troops on the ground and all the Services in support of it?

In particular, I must mention the outstanding performance of Pakistan Air Force, for whose direction of launching strikes on the enemy positions my squadron was fully involved and we had a hand and role in this. I bring this out because we felt a sense of betrayal. I may just briefly enumerate some important events to illustrate our feelings and misgivings.

The plan to change command, from Major General Akhtar Ali Malik to Major General A.M Yahya Khan, during the Chamb operations, baffled me. General Yahya Khan proceeded to make a fatal mistake on September 5, 1965, when he failed to take the offensive and capture the Akhnur Bridge, which had been left deserted by the enemy. Our troops, after having bypassed Fatwal Ridge, had reached within 2-3 miles of the Bridge. He later informed me he had acted under the presumption that the withdrawing enemy troops would retreat and take defensive positions in the foothills of Akhnur and around the bridge. He believed that it would be rash to act impulsively and hence waited for reconnaissance. He was unaware, because of the lack of proper intelligence that the enemy had withdrawn from this side of river Chenab, and had gone across the bridge, leaving the area of the bridge cleared out entirely. This allowed the enemy forces to realize our mistake, regroup and reoccupy the same position by dawn the next day. Major General Yahya Khan was forthright in accepting this error. However, there are some other versions of it. It was speculated that perhaps General Ayub Khan had secretly given orders to General Yahya Khan, not to capture the bridge. Even the change of command earlier had a big question mark on it. One of the United Nations

Observer, who was posted on the Indian side of Ceasefire line, came over after the war to Jaurian area, and raised the question: why did we fail to capture the bridge? Some Indian officers who were attending courses at different army institutions abroad too expressed their amazement why the bridge was not captured on the evening of September 5, 1965! Was it just because of some accident, some gross miscalculation by General Yahya, or was he under orders not to do so, remains a mystery. The fate of the 1965 war would have been decided the same night if we had captured that bridge.

On September 6, 1965, India launched its attack across the international frontiers: at the Jassar Bridge in the Sialkot sector, in the Lahore sector and a limited attack in Kasur sector. That day my squadron was moved to the Sialkot sector, and we were fully functional in that area for the rest of the war. The performance of Brigadier Ismail (GOC15 Division), Brigadier Muzzafur-ud-din (Commander, 101 Brigade), at Jassar Bridge), Brigadier A.A. Niazi (Commander, 14 Para-Brigade), to name a few, was nothing much to write home about. In fact, it was pathetic. On September 16,1965, the enemy mounted their main attack led by one Armoured Division which had the support of three Infantry Divisions. It was the fiercest day of the war. Towards the evening, not only their attack was blunted, but they also suffered heavy casualties and were in total disarray. A blanket call was repeatedly being given on their wireless network, ordering their tanks to withdraw individually, taking cover in the fields of sugarcane crops. They were forced to abandon some of their tanks in the area, which were later retrieved after the ceasefire. AsIsat listening to the enemy communications, the late Major General Abrar Hussain (GOC 6th Armoured Division) informed us that in his assessment not only was the Indian Armoured Division defeated, but they also ceased to exist as formations of Armoured Brigades and Armoured Regiments. If there was a time or an opportunity to counterattack, this was it. But, Major General Abrar Husain, said that it was beyond his resources, as his division too had suffered heavy casualties. He was of the opinion that he could only undertake limited responsibility for the launching of these counterattacks against the enemy positions. He felt that any major counterattack could only be launched by the Corps Headquarters, which was located in Gujranwala. He suggested that I appraise the Corps Headquarter with this situation so that they can make their plans for any major counterattack.

I flew into Gujranwala and reached the Corps Headquarters. Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana, the Corps Commander, was in his usual posture; looking at a map, smoking a cigar and gazing on it so intently, as if the map would do all the thinking for him. He had no sense or feel for the events of war and as always had no battlefield information. I had seen him on the previous occasions doing exactly that. I was always appalled to see his lack of information on the location of his own troops, let alone about the location and the threat of the enemy forces. Predictably, he was disconcerted about the possibility of taking any initiative of his own. I had seen this often, and every time I felt frustrated at the lack of professionalism of the Commander of the only Corps that Pakistan had at that point. Major General (later Lieutenant General) M. Yaqub Ali Khan was also sitting there with him. He had been rushed in as Deputy Corps Commander, as the Commander-in-Chief was aware of the folly of having a man of the caliber of General Bakhtiar Rana in Command. They both felt relieved to see me, expecting information. A day earlier, on the morning of September 16, 1965, when I visited the Corps Headquarters, we had gone through a similar exercise. I had informed them that the enemy had started operations since the morning of the 16th of September. I had described the situation, the way I saw it from the air and discussed it in detail with Major General Abrar on the ground. I explained to them that the Indian attack was a three-pronged attack; one column of the attacking forces was pushing towards Chawinda; the second thrust aimed between Chawinda and Badiana in the general area of Rakh, Baba Bureh Shah; the third wave directed towards Badiana. When they asked about my estimate of the enemy strength along each of these axes, I told them that in my opinion, they had an armoured regiment supported by the infantry along each of the three axes. It was a full-fledged enemy Armoured Division attack. In response, and to my astonishment, Major General Yaqub inquired about the strength of own troops we had in the area. Here I was sitting at the Corps Headquarters, talking to an integral officer of the high command; the war had raged on for nearly 10 days and he still did not have the foggiest idea of the dispositions of his own troops. I told them that we had 25 Cavalry at Chawinda, Guides Cavalry at Rakh Baba Bureh Shah and 22 Lancers at Badiana. Upon hearing this information, both the Corps Commander and the Deputy Corps Commander felt relieved. Major General Yaqub composed himself and said that in his assessment, if we had a regiment of Armour pitted against a regiment of the Indian Armour, he felt that there would be no breakthrough. While I agreed with this tactical assessment of the situation, I told them both that so far we had only been reacting to the enemy plans and implored them to seize the initiative while we had the chance to. Their response was, Yes, it will come at a suitable time. My day's information and description of the battlefield was precise, and my assessments had proved correct.

On the morning of the next day, I conveyed the events of the previous day to Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana and Major General Yaqub, informing them as to how the Indian attack had been blunted and how they had been forced to retreat and even abandon several of their tanks. My assessment was very clear that the enemy armoured division had been completely mauled and had suffered heavy casualties. It had ceased to exist as a formation. I reiterated that I felt that this was the time to abandon the reactionary tactics and to formulate an actual plan of our own. Both commanders were in full agreement with my assessment, so I suggested that Major General Yaqub should personally fly out with me and examine the battlefield from the air since the proximity would help in formulating a solid plan for action. Major General Yaqub, though, was of the belief that the intelligence that I had provided him was enough for him to find out a model of the battle, and so he felt no need to take an aerial tour of the battlefield himself. They called Colonel (Later Major General) Farman Ali, who had joined Headquarter 1 Corps as Colonel GS. He also took part in all the discussions held. The Deputy Corps Commander asked Colonel Farman to prepare the operational plans. He also flew over the area in the helicopter along with Major (Later Brigadier) Ali Jawahar, the captain. I learned that Colonel Farman Ali had prepared six different operational plans out of which one had been selected for execution. Colonel (later Major General) FarmanAli, after hisretirement, offered to giveme the final approved plan of our counterattack which had appropriately been named Operation "Wind Up". Unfortunately, Major General (Retd) Farman passed away before I could acquire these plans. The plan, as is recorded in history, was delayed beyond the 18th of September until eventually a ceasefire was accepted and it could never come to fruition. The reasons for this delay are still a mystery to most of my colleagues, including Major General (Retd) Farman Ali, and me. The consensus among the soldiers in the field, with which I agree, including Major General Abrar Husain, was that the counterattack should not have been delayed and the ceasefire should not have been accepted without implementing this plan. It is our firm conviction that the history of 1965 war would have been much different than the stalemate it ended in, if we had launched a bold offensive. Lieutenant General Gul Hassan, in his "Memoirs," alludes to it as, "I met some of its men and they were still in a state of deadened sensibility and had not fully recovered from the traumatic experience in the Kasur-Khem Karan area". I cannot agree with this conclusion drawn. I will dwell more on this later. The professional caliber and the temerity of the newly assigned Deputy Corps Commander, Major General Yaqub Ali, were distinctly exposed. One felt very frustrated at the poor performance of these key commanders in the heat of battle. Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik, Commander 24th Brigade stood out as the most composed and brave chief. Major General Abrar Husain, GOC 6th Armored Division kept his cool, did not panic and handled the situation steadfastly. His nerves stood the test of war, but he could not adequately control the major armoured formations. This was primarily because of his lack of sufficient experience in the handling and the planning of armoured formations and their tactics, as he was an infantry officer. He did not make any divisional or even armoured brigade level plans. The units were mostly committed individually with limited coordination for the support of infantry units. The units fought magnificently and carried the day. Major General Tikka Khan, GOC 15th Division, handled the area in his command with valor and determination and kept a cool, calm and composed posture. Most of the other commanders were a great disappointment. One was wondering what command structure General (Later Field Marshal) Ayub Khan had given this army. Equally catastrophic was the performance of Major General Nasir Ahmad Khan, GOC 1st Armored Division in the Khem Karan area of operation. One felt that this was a great betrayal of national interests. Ayub had done this to secure his position as the President of the country and in total disregard of national interests, aspirations and demands of serving the conduct and the performance of the Army.

When I was moving from the HQ 7 Division (Chamb) to the Sialkot sector on the 6th of September, I met with Major General Yahya Khan, who asked me to visit him whenever I got the opportunity. He said this, particularly because as GOC 15 Division (in Sialkot), he had done the entire operational planning for that sector. He told me he had walked over the entire area on foot and knew it like the back of his palm. It was a vital area of the battle now, and the outcome would likely be reached here. He was keen and intent on following events that unfolded in this sector. I complied with this desire that he showed. Major General Yahya had his drinking under control and had a clear head. He was at the peak of his professionalism and I respected him for that, despite the fatal mistake he had made at Akhnur. I vividly recall all meetings and briefings with him throughout the operations, and even after the ceasefire. It was a period of war, and I was only a Lieutenant Colonel, but still I felt no inhibitions and offered my views to him on the battle and performing some other commanders in the field openly, and with candor. He heard my views patiently and quietly, with deep interest, and showed no signs of irritation or annoyance. I was entirely forthright in discussing the performance and professionalism of some principal commanders of Sialkot Sector. I felt very relieved when he said, "Mahmud, I agree with you, we have failed to give the army the generalship it deserves." This requital from him gave me some confidence, and I replied spontaneously, "Sir, thank God that somebody realizes the dilemma within this army."

My next one-to-one meeting with him took place some days after the ceasefire. It had a rather awkward pretext and background. On the day of the ceasefire, September 23,1965, I wassitting at the squadron strip at Sambrial lamenting, somewhat despondent at the events leading up to the ceasefire. Lieutenant Colonel M. Zafar Khan, an aviator and a friend, came visiting the squadron from Dhamial. I gave him a brief account of the war. It was an excellent opportunity for me to vent the feelings of frustration that had been bottled shut. While praising the performance of the troops, particularly Lieutenant Colonel and below, I was straightforward about my criticism of key people at different levels in command. In no uncertain terms, I condemned the decision of the ceasefire. I termed it as an act of betrayal with the country. Having heard my views, and perhaps even agreeing with them, he flew back to Dhamial that evening. The same night he went to a dinner at the place of one of his friends, Iqbal Shahban, where he gave a particularly expressive description of his own views on the events that had transpired towards the latter half of the war and the ceasefire specifically.

Probably, he subscribed to my assessment, and maybe he used some strong words in giving these out. Incidentally, Amir Zeb, the younger brother of Field Marshal Ayub's other son-in-law Miangul Aurangzeb, was also present at the dinner. Perhaps he had taken a few drinks too many and was not sober. He was rather perturbed at this exposition. He went rushing to his father-in-law and directly narrated to him the opinion Zafar had expressed. Maybe he even exaggerated and overstated. General Ayub called his Military Secretary, Major-General M. Rafi, and asked him to speak to General Musa about this matter and to inquire into it. For General Musa, even a mild hint was a commandment. He would always faithfully act. Next morning Director Military Intelligence Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Irshad Ahmed summoned Zafar to GHQ. Zafar entered the office of the MI chief, only to find him fuming. He started scolding Zafar, asking him as to whom he thought he was. Zafar was bewildered but maintained his cool long enough to inform the Brigadier he had no business shouting at him and asked him to be straightforward and get to the point. Brigadier Irshad wanted to know whether he had said that Cease Fire was a wrong decision, to which Zafar responded in the affirmative. The Brigadier then asked him if he was prepared to give it in writing, to which Zafar again replied in the affirmative. Brigadier Irshad took out a piece of paper and put it in front of Zafar, on which he wrote that in my opinion ceasefire was a wrong decision, and he signed it. He took that paper from Zafar very promptly and went rushing to the office of General Musa, perhaps triumphantly. One assumes he must have told him that Zafar had confessed. Brigadier Irshad returned soon and told Lieutenant Colonel Zafar that he stood retired. Zafar acknowledged this and came out of the office of Director Military Intelligence. His was a composed and a dignified reaction and conduct. It was truly in conformity with the traditions of an upright officer; the one who would speak his mind out clearly, candidly, frankly, with no inhibitions and fear, and yet in all sincerity. That was the spirit of our course, and mostly we all lived up to it. This also drew sympathy and admiration of many other senior officers. Air Marshal (Retd) M. Asghar Khan immediately gave him a job in Civil Aviation Authority, and many others helped him in his later life. He did not have to regret his decision as he settled down well and had a very successful new career.

It was just by coincidence I had not gone to visit Major General Yahya at his location near Chamb for some days. A few days after Zafar's abrupt retirement from the Army, Colonel Staff 7 Division, Colonel Rabbani, came to see me at Dhamial. He told me that Major General Yahya Khan had sent him personally to me with the instructions that he should bring me to him. I flew out to Chamb. As I approached his Headquarters, Major General Yahya was sitting outside his caravan. He looked at me, smiled, and said, "Bacho Dar Gayo Ho." " No sir." I replied. Before I had the chance to say anything else, he expressed his concern regarding Zafar's sudden retirement. He told me that on learning of this incident, he called General Musa and said, "How can you throw out such officers from the Army if you do that then who is going to do the fighting?" He told me he knew that my views were stronger than those of Zafar's. Everyone was stating it loud and clear that the ceasefire was a wrong decision. He felt it was only such officers who would fight for this country. He also said that when he had raised this concern of his, General Musa tried to explain it to him that Zafar was spreading despondency and undermining the morale of the Armed Forces and other Senior Civil Servants. I told him that what happened as is being described was not correct. In some anguish, he asked me, "Are you trying to tell me that the Commander-in-Chief of the Army is a liar.?" My spontaneous and blunt reply was, " Yes, sir." I certainly felt that I had opened my loud mouth a little too much, but I felt reassured at his nonchalant reaction. He made his intentions clear; he did not intent on sitting back and planned on taking up the matter with the General again. I felt cognizant of the grave misgivings about the higher command.

Major General A.M Yahya Khan again took up Zafar's case with General Musa. It was not clear whether it was because of the pressure exerted by Yahya, or the role played by Miangul Aurangzeb, General Musa was inclined to bring Zafar back in the Army, but he was now not interested. This sordid chapter thus ended. I am so highlighting it because in my close association with General Yahya, despite his personal weaknesses, I felt that he was a professional soldier and a man of integrity. I was to be disappointed and disillusioned very shortly. I thought earlier that if he were in command of the army, he could address all the weaknesses he had witnessed himself, and so told to him. During this last meeting, Major General Yahya Khan had said to me in some fond words that doors of his house will always be open to me and every time. I appreciated this and thanked him.

At this stage, I was developing a notion that the army was trying to cultivate subservient officers who could be entrusted with the senior appointments. Loyalty to their superiors appeared to be the guiding principle. I was getting a strange feeling that we were drifting away from the fundamental notion of an upright officer, the one who would have the courage to speak out his mind openly with sincerity and veracity.

Lieutenant Colonel Mansoor, one officer serving under me in the 1971 war, gave a crude example of the characteristics that the army desired to have in the officers. He said, "This army wants our officers to behave like mice during times of peace and then wants them to roar like lions in war." This apathy needed to be addressed seriously. We had to rise above our constraints, the ones developed by General Ayub Khan. He put his own security and the perpetuation of his rule above all other considerations. He needed compliant and faithful officers. Before and during the 1965 war, we had been saddled with a command structure that was thoroughly incompetent. I strongly felt that it was a great disservice to the army and the country. I hope to be more specific when I describe the actual events of our wars.

Major General Yahya later became the Commander-in-Chief in 1966. I had high expectations from him and was excited to see how he performed. At least we now had a commander who understood the institution‘s shortcomings and will correct them. He was an intelligent professional soldier. It would be no exaggeration to say that the war of 1965, by far, was fought by Lieutenant Colonels and below, and the generalship was hardly worth the name. There were very few exceptions. I believed that Yahya was fully conscious of these facts as he had shared these thoughts with me on many an occasion. I was, however, soon disillusioned and disappointed. I was surprised that in the very initial stage of his assumption of command; he promoted some very same persons that he had criticised vigorously, even going to the extent of abusing them. I was losing my faith in him. As these feelings of resentment and bitterness against him were surfacing, I swore to myself never to see him again. I broke this pledge once, but it was my compulsion so I must narrate it. My mother, after an operation of breast cancer and its subsequent course of treatment in Germany and UK, had secondary's spread on the other breast. Surgeon, Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Shaukat Hassan was incredibly kind to me when I went to see him to get an early appointment for my mother. "Mahmud, I consider your mother as my mother. Why should you bring her to CMH, I will personally come to your house to check up on her," he said?

He made his visit the same day and checked up on my mother, informing us it was best if she was admitted to CMH immediately so he could operate on her the next day. I went to CMH and met Colonel Mushtaq, who was the Commanding Officer, but he refused to admit her point blank. He told me that there was no room available at CMH. This exacerbated me. I drove straight to the residence of General Yahya Khan. As I drove in, he was coming out of the house to play golf. Upon seeing me, he inquired, "You are looking anxious and perturbed." When I told him about my predicament, he told me to call his military secretary, Major General Ishaq, who would arrange a room for me. As he was about to walk towards the golf course, he abruptly stopped and looked at me as he said, "I am sorry. I want to apologise. I will not be going for golf. Why should you be bothering? You just go home and wait." With these words, he walked back to his house. As I arrived back at my house, there was a call from Major General Ishaq telling me that Colonel Mushtaq was waiting for me at CMH and that I should take my mother immediately for admission. It was a kind gesture by General Yahya, one which I appreciate and cannot forget. Equally, it showed the humane and passionate aspects of his character.

I wonder, even today, how General Yahya degraded himself from a brilliant and professional soldier to the levels of total apathy and moral bankruptcy. Probably drinking and other habits had affected his mental faculties, and I thought he had stopped applying his mind to the affairs of the state. He was surrounded by a bunch of self-serving, incompetent and imbecile group of officers, who allowed matters to drift until they came to a disastrous pass. I will not go into those details. But I strongly feel that we need to identify those people, and those among them still living must be made answerable and accountable for all their doings.

The entire purpose of giving this brief prelude is to explain my strong conviction and the practice of disassociating with those in whom I lost my faith. I purposely made sure not to see him till the day he died.

General Yahya Khan is dead, and I do not feel the need for any further character assassination, as the ultimate arbiter is God Almighty himself, so we let Him judge. To explain the degeneration that afflicted him, I must give some details of the episode of Persepolis. The late Shah of Iran had made a far-reaching effort to peacefully resolve the ongoing conflict regarding the struggle for separation of East Pakistan, which was being actively fueled by India, with Russia also giving tacit support. To decrease tension on either side, a meeting was arranged between General Yahya and President Podgorny, during Iranian celebrations at Persepolis. An eyewitness account of this rather nasty chapter was given to me by a relative of mine, Agha Hesham-ud-Din, who was posted as press attaché in Tehran. He graphically illustrated to me a first- hand account of this incident. Knowing the seriousness of the situation prevailing in East Pakistan, it was planned that soon after his arrival at Persepolis, General Yahya was to have a meeting with President Podgorny. To facilitate this meeting, the tents of both leaders were pitched opposite to each other. The PIA plane bringing General Yahya landed, and as he alighted out of the aircraft onto the gangway, all those present to receive him were shocked. General Yahya was drunk and could hardly come down the steps. He had to be held and escorted from both sides to facilitate his coming down. As he was ushered to his tent, he was told that it was time for his meeting with President Podgorny. He staggered his way through and entered the tent of his host for the meeting, and he was wobbling. To everyone’s shock, the meeting was very short and cut off. General Yahya made his way back to his tent in the same state as he had left.

It was planned that soon after the Podgorny-Yahya meeting, Amir Ali Tahiri, the editor of Khayan International, was to interview President Podgorny since he wanted to make an assessment about the outcome of the meeting between the two leaders. Agha Hesham had run into Amir Taheri as he was leaving the President’s tent after finishing the interview. He very candidly told him in Persian, “Agha, I am afraid it is all over. There is no hope for Pakistan.” Further describing the meeting, Amir Ali Tahiri said Podgorny told him that, as General Yahya sat for the meeting, he addressed him as Mr President. To this, General Yahya, showing reservations and anxiety, told Mr Podgorny that he was not only the President of Pakistan but also the Chief Martial Law Administrator. Mr Podgorny remarked, “Yes, Mr President, I understand that.” At this, General Yahya Khan retorted again, “I have already told you I am also the Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan.” Podgorny politely acknowledged and said, “I understand that.”To this General Yahya, in a bizarre and unbecoming act, pointing his fingers towards Mr Podgorny and touching his lips, said, “You are saying it from here. ”He then touched his heart with his fingers and said, “I want you to speak from the heart.” It was only then that Mr Podgorny lost his patience and breaking off the meeting saying, “Thank you, you can go. This meeting is over.”

Is it not a tragedy that the affairs of the state, at those critical times, were left to the idiosyncrasy and the morbid handling of one man? He had foisted himself to the top, and now he was entirely mishandling the affairs of the state, in a rather bizarre manner. It seems we have not learned our lessons from such performances, and perhaps we are condemned to repeat our mistakes. It strengthened my resolve to completely disassociate myself from such people, and I abided by it. The question that keeps coming back, “Is it enough?” What else could I have done?

The aim of the discourse above was to shed light on some key personalities of the country, who rose to the top, failed miserably, and in doing so caused irreparable damage to the country. I have tried to display how General Yahya, who had the promise and the potential, allowed himself to degenerate to such a low level of abhorrence. It was out of this sense of frustration that I tendered my resignation in June 1971. My resignation was not accepted. Instead, I was promoted to the rank of Brigadier and was posted as Commander Artillery Division 33. I took over the command in protest. While doing so, I wrote to the Military Secretary at General Headquarters (GHQ) that since there is an emergency; I am taking over my Command, but after it is over, I will seek action and answer to this. No reply was forthcoming.

I, now, want to shift my mind to another personality whose actions have had far-reaching implications and a noticeable impact on Pakistan’s history. I do not mention him to ridicule him, nor do I mean to infer any malice or enmity through my words. Since this person is still alive (he has recently died), I want to politely invite him to correct me if I misquote or misstate anything. I have an entirely open mind and am prepared to provide any clarifications and hold any discussions at any forum. The person I am referring to is Chief Justice (Retd.) Nasim Hassan Shah. As

I recalled earlier, while sharing the benches overlooking the oval, we had a vision of what Pakistan would be! We parted our ways; I joined the Army, and he pursued his career as a lawyer. When he became a judge of the Lahore High Court, I felt euphoric of his achievement. Later on, he became a Judge of the apex court of Pakistan. One looked to him with a hope that he would fulfill the dreams we shared as to how to build Pakistan. I kept associating myself with him, though not too regularly, but always with affection and sincerity. It was one of those occasions where I had invited him to my home for dinner. The others who were invited were Mr Munir Hussan Shah, Secretary Information, Major General (later Lieutenant General) Sagheer Hussain Shah, the then DMLA Rawalpindi and Khawaja Shahid Hussain, Managing Director, NAFDEC. At that time, Z.A. Bhutto's trial was going on in the Supreme Court. Munir informally asked Nasim Hassan Shah, "Shahji, what is the material evidence in this murder case? Does it make a serious case for a trial?" Was the question asked. He very promptly and without a moment of reservation replied,"Bhutto has no case against him. Such murder cases cannot be proved or established. If the martial law authorities, wanted to get rid of him they could have killed or hanged him on July 5, 1977 when the coup was staged." Mr Munir Ahmad Khan, Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), who was also a friend of mine, had also told me, he along with Nasim Hassan Shah had gone to meet Chief Justice (Retd) Munir to seek his advice and opinion on this case. Chief Justice Munir had very candidly and explicitly told them that there is hardly any reliable evidence and that it will not be possible to establish any involvement of Z.A. Bhutto in this murder case. During the trial of Mr Bhutto at the Supreme Court, Nasim kept inviting me to witness the proceedings. Towards the conclusion of the hearing when Mr Bhutto got the permission to address the Supreme Court, Nasim Hassan specially arranged for me to attend the hearing for all four days that Bhutto was supposed to address the Court. I do not want to go into the details of Mr Bhutto's deposition in the Supreme Court. But I still cannot help but mention some observations that I have of this trial. I remember the moment that Mr Bhutto was ushered into the courtroom; his personality appeared to overpower and tower over all, including those who sat on the bench. I vividly recall that all the seven judges were resting with their backs to their chairs. On seeing Mr Bhutto enter the court, they instinctively sat upright, maintaining this posture throughout the rest of the trial. At the end of the first day's session, I went to the chamber of Justice Nasim Hassan Shah. As he arrived there a few minutes after I had reached, he spontaneously said, "Yaar, a man as brilliant as him, who has the heart to extinguish his life?" I very promptly agreed with this remark. I asked him that if he is convinced that Mr Bhutto is not guilty of this offence and that if gives his judgment acquitting him then, "What can General Zia do to you?" I further told him, "Zia cannot possibly hang you." He just nodded his head and said, "Yaar darr ei lagda."This explained everything. I hope the recording of this address of Mr Bhutto would be available in the records of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. I also hope that to preserve the history, sometimes these tapes will be released to the nation to hear what he had to say. From the beginning till the end of his address, he covered a lot of areas, mostly couched in legal language explaining his innocence. Here, what I want to mention is only a few lines of his opening and closing address. He started by telling the Honourable Judges, "My Lords, I am grateful to you for providing me with this opportunity to address you and along with you the entire nation. Through this forum, I want to tell my countrymen that I am innocent of the offence of which I am being charged. After this, even if you sentence me to death, I will have no regrets." In conclusion, while again thanking the court, he said, "My Lords, I am asking for no mercy. I am not pleading for any pity or remorse. All I want your Lordships is it to maintain the majesty of the law, and not to make it the matron of the martial law authorities." Since then I am pondering over this question, which keeps coming back to my mind; was justice done to Mr Bhutto? Were the dictates of the majesty of the law followed and honoured? I am not a legal expert, but I cannot help recalling repeatedly, the opinion and remarks of Justice Nasim Hassan Shah, made at my house and in his chambers. If he was honest in his statements and opinions, then quite obviously, he cannot explain his sudden tilt in giving the judgment of convicting Mr Bhutto. His was the balancing vote. The truth is only known to God Almighty, and he will surely pass his judgment on the day of resurrection. At least in my estimation, Nasim fell in my eyes; I have had no desire to meet him since then. By accident, I stumbled into him one day while attending a reception at the Marriot Hotel, Islamabad. I was in conversation with Lieutenant General Shaukat Hassan. Justice Nasim Hassan Shah entered the reception hall. On seeing me, he came straight towards me, embraced me and shook hands with me. After that, he extended his hand towards Lieutenant General Shaukat Hassan. He after giving a dirty look of indignation towards Nasim Hassan Shah, while still keeping his thumbs in the pockets of the waistcoat, abruptly took out his right hand and pointing his index finger down towards Nasim Hassan Shah said, "I refuse to shake hands with murderers like you." This caused so much embarrassment to Justice Nasim Hassan Shah that he started sweating profusely and he ran away from that hall.

Next day, early in the morning, he called me on the phone. He said he was very perturbed and had not slept the whole night. He asked me to come over to the Supreme Court immediately to see him. I felt no interest in doing so and quietly declined his request.

Here I again need to cast my mind back to the role of Nasim Hassan Shah, first as a judge of the Supreme Court, later when elevated to the coveted position of Chief Justice and finally his conduct as a retired Chief Justice. After his judgment in the then murder trial of Mr Bhutto, he had become a very controversial figure. His decision, as Chief Justice, to restore the first Nawaz Sharif government had raised many eyebrows. It is his behaviour after retirement that baffles one the most. Since my legal expertise is quite lacking, I cannot make more comments as to his role as a judge. But unquestioningly, I have strong reservations about his conduct and behaviour during his post-retirement period. It is both shocking and rather unexplainable. We have watched him desperately trying to stay in the limelight, sparing no occasion. It has all been abhorrent. Rather than keep a low profile, he has been relentless in his pursuit to remain in the limelight and feature prominently in every opportunity that he got. He lost no chance to curry favours with the Sharif brothers. Perhaps it was the rumours of his Cyprus account which were driving him in that direction. He always made continuous efforts to be seen in the corridors of power, jockeying for different positions. To be mild, he had not come up to the stature of the dignity required for the important positions that he had served in. This is not the Pakistan we dreamed of while spending seven years together in school and college. It was only later that he went into reclusion.

I want to recall the second last occasion that I met with Nasim Hassan Shah. It was some years ago, soon after General Musharraf's takeover, that I was attending a relative‘s Qul in Lahore. I was standing with Late Justice Riaz Hussain, with whom I was discussing Pakistan's history when Nasim walked in and saw us. He came towards us and embraced me. Looking at Justice Riaz, he said, “ Riaz, you perhaps do not know that Mahmud and I are the oldest of friends. From the days of Central Model School and Government College, Lahore.” To which I retorted, “Yes Shahji, we were superb friends, but since you became a lackey of General Zia-ul- Haq, I have lost all respect for you.” I was very surprised that he had no reaction. He did not seem to be perturbed or the least angry about my remarks. Instead, he said, “Let‘s forget that. You now tell me what are your views about the takeover of General Musharraf and what you feel will happen now?” My reply to him was straightforward and precise, “They will find more pliant judges like you and get the judgments of their choice.” Through hindsight now, it was an accurate prediction, almost prophetic even. I don’t feel constrained to express these candid opinions because I feel that one biggest failing that we have is that we do not have the moral courage to speak the truth. We have come to this pass because of this.

It was only in 2013 that both I and an old mutual friend of school days, Riaz Ahmad, decided to call on Nasim Hassan Shah at his house. He was very pleased to meet us. His memory was excellent; he recalled all details of the days we spent together in school and college. But when I mentioned Bhutto’s trial and asked him the reason behind his verdict, his answer was that he had no memory of that and such cannot comment. I was rather surprised at this sudden lack of remembrance. Was it genuine or just pretense? My mention of this sad chapter of our history is primarily to investigate the pressures that compelled Justice Nasim Hassan Shah to give this judgment. There seemed no logical reasons, and nor was there any legal basis. It was a sham trial. I can only describe this that perhaps there was a hand of destiny in this. Did Nasim Hassan Shah give this judgment through any coercion, or did he succumb to threats? In my opinion, this was one of the most important turning points in our history. Since then, the Supreme Court has been reduced to a compliant and obedient court. Some accounts even state that General Zia had placed a device right in front of the Chief Justice under the table in the courtroom. At any point, even during the trial, if General Zia felt the need to catch the attention of the Chief Justice, he would press the button to light this gadget. The Chief Justice would then immediately adjourn the court and move to his chambers to take any new instructions from the military dictator. There could be nothing more absurd and farcical.

The next thought that comes to mind is the way General Zia betrayed Prime Minister (PM) Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. I say this because while Mr Bhutto had many weaknesses; he had some genuine qualities that could not be overlooked and achievements that cannot be disregarded. How he gave this country its nuclear program, laid the solid foundation of friendship with China, hisresolute pursuit for the unification of the Islamic Ummah and the constitution to this country and above all, his defiance of the Americans, these alone merits recognition in our history. To illustrate this point, I want to mention a brief account of assessment of Mr Bhutto’s personality as described by Air Chief Marshal Agha Zulfikar Ali Khan, who was the then Chief of Air Staff. He highlighted, in particular, his courage to stand up to extreme external pressure and threats. He narrated an encounter with Dr Kissinger, who he was asked to meet with by Mr Bhutto. In this meeting, he was told to come prepared for a presentation of why the Pakistan Air Force needs A-7 aircraft. At arrival at Lahore, Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar made a joint presentation to Mr Bhutto and Dr Kissinger. He gave his analysis and justifications for A-7 aircraft. During this presentation, and in his presence, Dr Kissinger said, " Mr Bhutto, I can give you as many A-7 aircraft as you want, provided you give up your nuclear program." Mr Bhutto remained quiet till the presentation was over and then asked the Air Chief to wait in the other room, as he was to have a one-to-one meeting with Dr Kissinger. When Dr Kissinger left, Mr Bhutto called in Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar. He apprised him of the discussions he had with Dr Kissinger. He narrated that the hallmark of the negotiations was the blunt and a clear message that Dr Kissinger had conveyed. The words exchanged can best summarize the gist of the message. It started with Dr Kissinger telling Mr Bhutto, "You better give up your nuclear program and the championship of the Islamic world."To this, Mr Bhutto replied, " Our nuclear program is for purely peaceful purposes." On this, Dr Kissinger got very irritated and responded, " Mr Bhutto, do not insult the American intelligence." Mr Bhutto stood firm. In a blunt and very outspoken response he said, " Dr Kissinger, in the same token, you have no business raising this subject with me as we are a sovereign country." At this Dr Kissinger, assuming a threatening tone, said. "Mr Bhutto, the Republicans may take a lenient view of you, but if the Democrats get elected, they will make a horrible example out of you. Consider yourself standing in front of a diesel- electric locomotive. You will be rolled over." There was a composed but sharp and may be an offensive reply, "I don't give a damn."

It took a lot of courage, character and tremendous faith in himself to give such a straightforward answer to a serious threat given to him by the world's superpower. Mr Bhutto stood tall. We have now seen the response of many cowards, who in their pursuit would not hesitate to compromise on all important national issues. Realising the gravity of the situation, Mr Bhutto asked Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar, what does he feel the response should be. The Air Force Chief, while giving his personal views, replied; "On behalf of the Pakistan Air Force, I want to commit to you here and now; we forego our requirements of A-7 aircraft and that you should pursue the path of the nuclear program. Mr Bhutto asked Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar to go back and consult his service colleagues and then inform him of the consensus that was reached. The specific question that needed to be addressed was regarding the continuation of the nuclear programme. He also told him the dangerous implications of the threat administered to him. Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar requested General Shariff to have the service Chiefs convene. At the meeting, the subject was discussed, exhaustively and in extensive depth. There was the unanimous opinion that all the Chiefs fully stood behind the decision to continue the Nuclear Programme regardless of all threats.

Ayub Khan was the first to start this trend of bartering away Pakistan's sovereignty in pursuit of power, Yahya cultivated it further, but Zia successfully raised the bar by taking the country to abysmally low depths of national pride and dignity. As a result, we have ceased to exist as a sovereign state. The American influence is immense and is rooted deep in our politics, military hierarchy, and in all forms of our organisations and activities. In the country's interest and its future, our nuclear programme was most important, and that we decided not to forsake it for anything. All the service Chiefs pledged their support to Mr Bhutto. An unequivocal assurance was given to the PM that the Armed Forces were fully behind him. They advised him he should fearlessly remain embarked on this programme. All these sentiments had been conveyed to the PM in a clear and fully explicit letter through Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar. He showed me a copy of the letter. Such a pity, despite that having helped Bhutto reach such high levels of responsibility, Zia stabbed him in the back and removed him from the scene. The Nation of Pakistan needed to stand up to the threats, the bullying and the explicit intimidation of America the superpower. Instead, our hierarchy betrayed the National Interests and succumbed to the pressures of the International forces in their design and purpose.

It is essentially because of these judgments of our apex court that we have found a succession of periods of Martial Law. I want to reflect briefly only some of my thoughts and observations on the years of Zia-ulHaq's Martial Law. It was the longest martial law imposed in this country, destroying the very moral fiber of our nation. Zia ruthlessly worked to make everyone subservient to him. Most people at the helm of affairs could only survive through their servility to him. And they all obliged. For me, the most extraordinary aspect was his claim that he received all his guidance and instructions from Allah. I disagree; it is my impression that he was getting his orders from his masters in Washington. He was, in fact, picked up for his future role in Pakistan while he was serving in Jordan as a Brigadier.

He had taken part in the campaign to crush the Palestinians, leading the tank force in the operations in Jordan. Late Major General Nawazish

Ali, who was the head of the mission in Jordan, wrote to GHQ that this officer should be recalled back to Pakistan and made to retire from the army for the nefarious role that he had played. Brigadier (Later General) Zia immediately contacted Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Pir Abdullah Shah of Guides Cavalry, who was living at Kohat after his retirement.Zia had a close relationship with him from the time when he had served under his command in Guides Cavalry. He was proficient in making use of his contacts, and in particular, Lieutenant General Gul Hasan. He had done so previously when he used the same connection to wriggle himself out of his attending the Army War Course, where he had been detailed. On Lieutenant Colonel Pir Abdullah Shah's request, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan had helped him in taking his name off the War Course. Lieutenant General Gul Hassan had told me he went to see General Yahya and made the request for Zia's transfer somewhere else and to take his name out of the War Course. He mentioned that on this, General Yahya remarked, "He wants to get out of this course lest he is found out." General Yahya agreed to take his name out and posted him to Jordan. On receiving the news of this letter from Major General Nawazish Ali; Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Pir Abdullah Shah again approached Lieutenant General Gul Hassan. He obliged him and had the matter hushed up. Other details of this saga and background of the CIA links so cultivated, I will elaborate later.

There are many other examples that one could give. Lieutenant General Rafaqat held his sham referendum for General Zia-ul-Haq and still hasn't been questioned as to his reasons. Should these quandaries not be addressed?

These are only some random thoughts. Importantly these are examples of how this country's interests have been betrayed by some people and yet it never raised serious alarm signals in the minds of those who were in the corridors of power. Did they have no qualms of conscience and there were no feelings for the national interest of the country? Were they genuinely fooled into believing that the one man at the helm of the affairs was pursuing the right path? The biggest problem is that nobody, those close to them, the civic society, the legal community, the intellectuals and even all the bystanders kept quiet. It is time that we showed resolve and challenge such disastrous policies of our dictators. The people of Pakistan must stand up and be counted. Many examples flashback in my mind where we have allowed the distortion of facts and twisting and slandering the history of this country. Some in brief reflection are of late Lieutenant General, Akhtar Abdur Rehman. His performance in 1965 and 1971 war is all too well known to all those who were his comrades. Without castigating him, I would say that the apt description would be that he usually stayed hidden and protected in his bunker. He hardly would venture to come outside the safety area that he had built for himself, and even for the call of nature he had a wooden commode placed in it. The place stank and visitors could hardly stay in that protected bunker. But yet people have the audacity to project in the book, "The Silent Soldier" that this brave soldier as we all knew, who kept hiding in a bunker throughout the 1971 war, was now being made to roar like a lion in Afghanistan. It is being projected that he single handed wrested the initiative from the Soviets, inflicted a total defeat on them and thus captured the whole of Afghanistan all by himself. Nothing would be further from the truth. There cannot be a bigger perversion of history than what is being projected in this book. This account in the book was later followed by an article written by General K.M. Arif in Dawn newspaper, under the caption of "Success of Afghan policy." I felt a compulsive constraint to write back, asking as to what Afghan policy the government had! I was persuaded by some of my friends and colleagues not to publish it as it will have far-reaching repercussions. That I gave in to this pressure, I feel ashamed now. I am now reproducing it in the background's context of the events as they unfolded.

Upon reading the article, 'Success of Afghan Policy" by General (Retd.) K. M. Arif, a strange brew of emotions flooded my insides, ranging from disbelief and shock to amazement and bewilderment. The article was a blatant distortion of historical facts, deceitful as it was abhorrent. It is with a sense of purpose and commitment to put events in their correct historical perspective that one feels compelled to at least attempt to set the record straight. This curse of self-deceit, hypocrisy, and unabashed falsehood, which has plagued the nation for so long, must be brought to its end.

What is the driving motive and justification behind the exploitation of the media towards this end? It comes from a variety of reasons. Pakistan, like many newly emerging countries, has had the misfortune of being under the rule of several military establishments. They had no constitutional or moral authority, but through the support of the Army, they imposed themselves. These establishments often brought in their wake, organised propaganda campaigns whose sole purpose was to help maintain the false pretenses created by said administration. Although they were unsuccessful in these endeavours, the consequence was that there was a decline in values. Systematically, all institutions have been brought to the verge of collapse. The only organisation that has partially withstood these erosions is the Armed Forces. Even amongst them, the Army has become politicised, which has resulted in the emergence of a paranoia and consequential submissiveness among those in the Executive who are always wary of the potential menace of those in khaki uniforms. Unless we identify, determine and pursue a national political will, which represents the people and allowed to establish its unfettered authority, the country will continue to roll on a path of self- destruction like a rudderless ship. The cause of this is two-fold. First, those adventurers and their coterie of advisors and sycophants had cleverly created a system of accountability with an inbuilt exit strategy tailored for their advantage. Second, steady moral debasement has taken out the courage to identify and establish the truth.

A new breed of journalists is emerging. These are the self-styled, pseudo- intellectuals and include several retired senior army officers. Save for a few qualities which made them useful to their ambitious superiors, what claim to greatness do they have? Their success in the Army is not because of outstanding service or attributes of professionalism, but rather because of methods which are dubious. They are the product of a promotion system tailored for their talents. This system acted as the desired filter, giving preference to these staff officers over those who had the command and war experience. Those who were competent, outspoken, sincere to the country and the Army, rather than to an individual, did not advance up the ranks and the few who could beat the system, could be tamed to submission. The very few exceptions that still survived were forced out conveniently. Ironically, the same people later masterminded the notorious referendum results. From the comfort of their chairs, they achieved all the desired results in rigging all the subsequent elections. The reasons behind the creation of said system and the identity of the perpetrators behind require a chapter by themselves.

No wonder that we have bizarre examples of promotions. In which army of the world could a person superseded at most senior ranks, get elevated to the position of the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, without commanding a Corps and despite being over the age of retirement? Here, we have books written about this silent soldier, about his achievements and accomplishments.

His only claim to glory comes through a family business concern, aided by CIA money, nurtured and promoted directly because of his position in the government on a very key intelligence appointment: this was equally and entirely patronised by his great benefactor. They first exploit their position and through corruption amass wealth and then seek their own glorification. Similarly, the author of the article served his despotic master so faithfully; now has the temerity to give this nation the words of wisdom. He must reflect on his own self first, and give the justification for his bizarre promotion to a four-star General, without commanding a Division or a Corps. It is making a complete mockery of the promotion system. Zia had turned this Army into his own personal fiefdom! When the system is made subservient to the wishes of one person, the best qualified rarely make it to the top. It's no wonder that the products of this system could allow an entire country to be kept hostage by one man for 11 years. And then, rather than slip out of the limelight, these people speak openly and broadly of the successes of their masters. All of this to seek recognition as advisors to the selfish, unprincipled and insincere rulers, they had served so well and for so long.

The success of the Afghan policy is a claim at the moment in the domain of the foreign policy of the country. Many other ideas on the success of the economic, political, military, spiritual, religious, and other facets of Pakistan's policies could well be churning in their minds. They have every right to project that, but then it is the responsibility of the others to dissect those claims so that the facts are represented in their true historical perspective.

Since the author has only proclaimed the success of the Afghan policy of General Zia, one would feel the need to trigger an open debate on this issue. The concerns involved are not as simple as they might appear in that article. The geopolitical considerations, the ramifications of the events of the past 30 years on the military and the economic balances and imbalances and the entire gamut of chain reactions and counter- reactions, have a far- reaching impact on Pakistan. The most critical aspect is that the success of this policy, if there were such a thing, is only determinable in terms of the national interest it has served. You can have a mosque named after Zia in Kabul, but there is no denying the three million refugees taken in and the Kalashnikov culture and the spread of the curse of drug addiction that is associated with them. In the same token, through cricket diplomacy, you could have a stadium named after Zia in India, but also give up the cause of the downtrodden people of Kashmir and call that a success too. It is all a matter of perspective.

An understanding of the unfolding of events in Afghanistan is the first prerequisite to identify whether any development resulted from a conscious effort on anyone's part or could it just be termed as an accident of history. The first benchmark is the relationship between Pakistan/ Afghanistan, as it emerged at the time of independence. The vested interests created the problems of Pakhtoonistan. The relationship between ordinary citizens of both countries was pleasant and friendly, whereas the Afghan rulers displayed varying degrees of hostility, although they posed no serious military threat. At a critical juncture in Pakistan's history, unparalleled support was shown by most segments of Afghan society. However, the rulers of Afghanistan kept alive Pakhtoonistan through the active support of a minority of fully committed players in Pakistan.

The most critical stage in the Pakistan/Afghan relationship arose when the manifestation of the policies of the Afghan rulers triggered subversive activities within Pakistan. So far Pakistan's drift in foreign policy only amounted to gestures and conditioned responses to the initiatives being taken by the Afghan authorities. There was no comprehensive assessment, let alone any policy to counteract it. The gradual increase in economic interest and subsequent integration of the North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) with the rest of the country kept diluting the sting of the Afghanistan's claims of Pakhtoonistan.

It was at this stage that Pakistan could plan and developing its approach and policy towards Afghanistan. The architect behind this new direction in policy was Brigadier (Later Major General) Naseerullah Khan Babar, who was at the time posted in Peshawar as the Inspector General of the Frontier Corps. During one of Mr Bhutto's tours of the tribal territories, he stayed at the Parachinar Mess. It was on such an evening there that there was a small meeting. Mr Bhutto, Khan Abdul Qayum Khan (Interior Minister), Mr Aslam Khattak (the Governor of NWFP), Mr Ejaz Naik (Chief Secretary NWFP), Dr Humayun Khan (Secretary Interior NWFP), Brigadier N. K. Babar and I were amongst those present. I recall Khan Abdul Qayum Khan was giving Mr Bhutto advice. He thought the people of Pakistan were very emotional and impulsive, which also resulted in them having a brief memory. He gave the example of his dismissal from the government. He had led a procession from Rawalpindi to Lahore, and it was the biggest and most enthusiastic reception that he ever had in his political career. However, this euphoria soon fizzled out and faded. His advice for Mr Bhutto was to keep this in mind when making any future decisions.

It was during this rather congenial atmosphere that Babar asked Mr Bhutto if Durand Line was the international boundary between Pakistan and Afghanistan. Mr Bhutto looked rather perplexed as he responded in the affirmative and inquired as to the reason for this obvious question.

Then why should we not extend the writ of the Government of

Pakistan right up to the Durand line? Babar responded. A subsequent discussion on this suggestion took place in which Mr Aslam Khattak and some others strongly opposed this. They questioned the wisdom in this and feared the backlash from the Afghans especially considering this had not been done before, even when the Quaid had been alive. After listening to different views and opinions, Mr Bhutto gave his approval and authorised the positioning of the scouts to the posts extending right up to the Durand Line. The other point that Babar raised was that the Afghan rulers had intensified their interference in Pakistani affairs and were generating a demand for Pakhtoonistan. To further their cause, they were conducting terrorist activities within Pakistan. He firmly believed that they were themselves more vulnerable on this front. To further elaborate, he said that he is in touch with many Afghans, who had become exceedingly resentful over the despotic rule of Sardar Daud and wanted an amenable relationship between both countries. His plan was to create problems within the Afghan regime through these contacts so that the Sardar Daud would be sufficiently preoccupied with problems within his country and therefore would not meddle within Pakistan. This caused a big uproar. Mr. Aslam Khattak protested profusely, proclaiming Babar to be mad and strongly cautioned that this would cause nothing but turmoil. Most others present also supported these views. Mr. Bhutto kept quiet. He made no comments and gave no decision on this. It was only some days later, that in a meeting between himself, General Tikka Khan (COAS) and Brigadier Babar, that he quietly gave his approval. With this approval, Babar planned and launched those strategies into action. The foremost task was the extension and the stationing of the scouts right up to the Durand line. In these ventures, Babar badly needed the support of the helicopters. Since we had no explicit instructions from GHQ to undertake such missions, I could only do so as my personal initiative and at my own risk. Babar was relentless, and I wilted under this pressure.

We undertook many missions in the tribal belt together. Invariably the call for such a mission originated through an ordinary message from Babar, requesting me to come over to Peshawar. It was only when I reached there that he came out with the details of the missions he planned to undertake. The locations would always be remote, uncharted and very dangerous, and upon my hesitation, Babar would always state that he knew the area well. These places, however, were all very unfamiliar territory and extended all along the Durand Line.

In the aviation, we were very familiar with Babar's exuberance and impudence. These ventures never seemed to worry him, and he would never admit to any lack of knowledge of the area. We had learned to live with this, and so I had to comply. We undertook several missions in these alien areas of the tribal territory. In hindsight, I can now say that they were very successful and given upon us a sense of accomplishment. These adventures we were undertaking had its grave hazards. I had lots of misgivings but had learned to overcome those. The most significant factor was that, for such missions, we had no verbal or written orders; they were strictly unauthorized. I was undertaking these as I had full faith in Babar's judgment and sincerity and the cause was of immense national importance.

I was the Base Commander of the only Army Aviation base at Dhamial. The Chief of General Staff at GHQ was in command of all Aviation units but had delegated control to the Vice Chief of General Staff (VCGS), Brigadier S.S.A. Qasim. Since I was absent from the base very frequently, he required that I seek his approval before undertaking any outstation forays. This irked me, but I continued to go on these outstation flights without clearing them with the VCGS. Eventually, he sent written instructions to this effect. I knew if I had to follow those orders, I would not be at liberty to undertake all those missions Babar wanted to conduct in the entire area of the tribal belt. This also hindered all my other outstation flights to various Army Aviation units spread all over Pakistan. I sought an appointment with the CGS, Major General M. Rahim Khan. In that meeting, I emphasised that Army Aviation units were spread all over Pakistan and if I had to exercise adequate supervision and control of these activities, I must have an unfettered, free initiative and choice of my movements. I also politely suggested that if he felt otherwise, then I should be taken out of Aviation Command and posted elsewhere. I was greatly relieved when the CGS agreed with my assessment of the situation, leaving me completely free to fly wherever I felt the need to be. It still did not cover all unbridled incursions in the remote areas of the tribal territories. I had the approval of GHQ to provide helicopter support to Babar in the discharge of his duties as IGFC, and so this was adequate cover as far as I was concerned.

This freedom gave me great relief, and I undertook many further missions and also by many other pilots to support Babar's plans. One such mission was to a place called Qamar-ud-din Karez. It was close to the Durand Line, and Babar intended to establish a scout post in the area. Before his scouts even reached there, he took me on one mission to that place. It was an entirely unfamiliar terrain. I am not sure if it was Babar's knowledge of the area, as he always claimed, or it was my map reading and correct orientation that helped, but we reached the right place. Luckily, Babar had sent some message to the Tribal Maliks of the area. When we landed there, they were expecting us, meeting us very warmly and enthusiastically. They told us that ever since the British left India and since the creation of Pakistan; they had seen no officials of the Government in the area. They kept explaining how they have to go to the Qazi courts, across the Durand Line, to seek all decisions on various disputes. It flashed to me it was the year 1972, and for the past 25 years they had seen no writ of Pakistan in that area. It was incredible to see a sense of patriotism and pride within them. The scouts who were to be positioned there had not reached yet, and we did not have any political agent with us. How many days later the scouts arrived there to establish the posts, I do not know. The entire time we spent with these people, however, was splendid and their hospitality had no bounds.

Another such mission was in the Tirah valley. When I landed at Jamrud Fort, Babar was waiting there with another gentleman, who had the typical look and demeanour of a Tribal Malik. His name was Wali Khan. I was not familiar with the history of the tribal areas and the many military incursions that had been undertaken by both the British and, after partition, the Government of Pakistan. The most striking thing was that there had been a serious clash in the area between the Tribal Maliks and the scouts of the Frontier Corps some years back. Wali Khan was explaining how the Pakistan Air Force had been used in the area. He had bitter memories of how his house had been targeted and destroyed by our Air Force. This shook me, and I wondered what mess Babar had gotten us into this time. I was relieved, however, when Wali Khan told me he had forgotten the animosity of the past, subsequently inviting us to come to the Tirah Valley as his personal guests. We took off and proceeded towards our destination. Wali Khan was thoroughly familiar with the area. He was expertly describing all the landmarks on the way. As we approached his village, from a distance, he showed us his destroyed house. This time luckily I was not dependent on Babar’s knowledge of the area and nor had I to count on my ability of the map reading in these difficult areas. There were no distinct features to identify; it was just a series of valleys and hilltops, and a dirt road which was a great help. As I was approaching the village, Wali Khan showed the general area where I should land.

I was still circling the area trying to pick a suitable helipad when I heard some sounds. I told Babar that some bullets were being fired at the helicopter. Babar in his usual exuberance dismissed the thought. Lo-andbehold, there was another loud noise, and this time a more intense volley of bullets came flying perilously close to the helicopter. I immediately turned the helicopter away and climbed further into the sky to put distance between the attacker and us. Upon reaching a suitable height, we inspected the area below but found it tricky to determine the exact direction from which the firing had originated. Wali Khan was very adamant that it could not be from his village, and we believed him. Pathans have an unyielding sense of hospitality and a fierce desire to ensure the security oftheir guests. Someone, who was not aware that Wali Khan was on board with us and that we were his guests, was likely the culprit. Wali Khan was profusely apologetic. He was a respected Malik of the area and was giving his assurance that he will find out and sort out the offender. Better sense prevailed, and we returned to Peshawar without enjoying the hospitality of our host. Wali Khan was giving us an open invitation to come again and that he would fully take care of the security. I could not avail this invitation. I believe Babar did. Later, I recall a proper road was constructed there along with other substantial development projects in the area.

On another one of these missions, we were to go to some remote area beyond Fort Sandeman. The name I do not remember. We flew to Fort Sandeman, spent the night there, enjoying the hospitality of the TOCHI Scouts, and then left for our destination the next morning. Before leaving, Babar told me he wanted to fly, I thought he was joking, but upon reaching the helicopter, I realised that he was serious. Major (Later Brigadier) Nauman was the actual Captain of the aircraft; I had received none formal training required for a helicopter pilot. I had done some fairly extensive flights on the Alouette helicopter and was barely even proficient in handling that. I told Bob about the quandary, but he would not listen to me. As I perched myself on the Captain’s seat, Babar promptly occupied the co-pilot seat. I was in a dilemma. The captain of the aircraft had been pushed to the back. I did not know what to do! I appeased myself to endure yet another one of Babar’s wild and reckless adventures. I started the helicopter and handed over the controls to him. He tried to take off immediately without even trying to get it to hover first. Just as he did that, I saw the helicopter was getting completely out of control. It was swaying with no directional control.

I took over the controls immediately and with difficulty steadied the helicopter. Admonishingly, I asked Babar what the hell he was doing. He quietly told me that the rudder paddles were stuck and jammed. If he had first hovered the helicopter, which is the standard practice before takeoff, he would have immediately recognised the defect, and we could have landed back on the ground. Here we were now airborne, and the helicopter had barely steadied and had no rudder control. We were now obliged to make an emergency landing. The choice was to do it right there at Fort Sandeman or to do the same at the destination. I conferred with Nauman who felt that the Hudloid damper had failed and that we were now obliged to make a landing with no rudder control. Through the cyclic control, the helicopter was maintaining a reasonably stable flight. We chose the option to attempt the emergency landing at the destination. The flight was uneventful, but the landing had severe problems. Because of the torque effect of the helicopter, the directional control without the rudder pedals was the biggest problem. It was Major Nauman's prowess that eventually helped us land the helicopter successfully. He coordinated from the back seat, the shutting down of the engine at the most appropriate stage of the landing, and ensured that we touched down smoothly, without the helicopter getting out of control and crashing on the ground.

On another occasion of his various visits to his units, Babar had gone to Chitral. He encountered some problems with the troops who had a few grievances, and subsequent news came that they were not letting him come out of Chitral. The message had come to GHQ, and when the CGS heard about it, he summoned me. I told him I would fly out to Chitral and examine the situation, but considering that it may be a serious problem, he joined me. While we were approaching Chitral, we were told that all is under control and we can land. Babar was at the airport to receive us, and in his usual self, he explained that it was a simple problem and it had been sorted out.

I am sharing these stories as an attempt to articulate an apt description of the way Babar's mind worked. He was always full of initiative and had the will and determination to execute the mission regardless of the hazards. The new policy that he had developed was a bold enterprise. He had it approved by the PM and executed it with perfection. The writ of the government had been extended right up to the Durand line, and all the Tribal Maliks had come on board with us. They were extending their full support and cooperation. It was most comforting. Could it be better! Perhaps with more vigorous contacts with the Maliks, understanding their problems and grievances and ensuring development in the area, one could provide them and the people of the area with relief and improvement of their life.

Besides the process of integration of the Tribal Belt with the settled districts of Pakistan, the other critical and important aspect of the new policy was to identify and cultivate suitable contacts within Afghanistan.

This was done over a longer period. These components had been in touch with Babar and wanted to play a concrete role in forging healthy bonds between Afghanistan/Pakistan. The troublesome and despotic rule of Sardar Daud was not in the best interests of the country according to these people. They composed mostly of well-educated people; Professor Rabbani, the head of the Engineering Faculty at Kabul University, Engineer Gulbedin Hikmatyar and many others of his students were part of this group. They were all picked up, some by helicopters, others came by land. These included all the names like Maulvi Khalis, Dostum, Ahmad Shah Masood, Mujaddidi, Saif and many others. Since I was involved in some of these errands, I also got to know a few of them. Later they all became Commanders in their own areas and attained prominence. Some 2000 of them were picked up. They were trained at Cherat with the Special Services Group and at the Armoured Corps School at Nowshera. It was under the garb of new recruits for the Frontier Corps Scout units. At Nowshera, Babar put Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Mokeet in charge and hence an active nucleus was thus created.

These soldiers were the first manifestation of a proper policy initiative in Afghanistan. Their first operation was in the Paktia Province, Afghanistan, and paid immediate dividends, making the situation abundantly clear to the Afghan hierarchy. Sardar Daud came rushing for a meeting with Mr. Bhutto, where he stated that he was prepared to recognise Durand Line as the International Frontiers and that demands for Pakhtoonistan would be silenced. He also agreed to sign a formal agreement to this effect, but before this document was signed, the Generals acted on July 4, 1977, and staged a coup. The so- called authors of the success of Afghan policy were entirely oblivious to the situation. Lieutenant General (Retd) Faiz Ali Chishti, told me a few years ago, that he was on board the helicopter when Mr.Bhutto and Sardar Daud flew to Murree and had been privy to Sardar Daud's offer to Mr. Bhutto. When the coup was staged, Lieutenant General Chishti, being aware of the conversation, suggested to General Zia that they should follow up on this and get the agreement signed. Zia agreed and called Sardar Daud for a meeting. When he met them, in his presence, Sardar Daud repeated his promise to honour the desired agreement. General Zia told Lieutenant General Chishti that since Sardar Daud is going for the noble cause of performing Umra, they should sign the agreement on his return. When he came back, he had another meeting with General Zia and Lieutenant General Chishti, where about signing the document, Zia suggested that it was best if this agreement was signed at Kabul. Later, when General Zia went to Kabul, he did not take Lieutenant General Chishti with him, and instead, Lieutenant General (Later General) Sowar Khan accompanied him. Chishti told me he was astonished that they came back without signing this agreement, divulging no reasons. This deal was vital to Pakistan, and yet General Zia deliberately avoided signing it. The only inference that can be drawn is that perhaps he was under instructions from some quarters, who did not want peace in this region and who wanted to see a continued period of instability in this area. They must have had their own plans for the Great Game and Zia succumbed to their/ his own desires rather than act in Pakistan's interests. Surely, he could not have been so naïve as not to have recognised the importance of this agreement!

These policy makers completely abandoned the 2000 volunteers who had been brought from Afghanistan. It was through foresight that they had been trained and moulded into a very efficient group of freedom fighters, launched into operations within Afghanistan. I was also involved in the picking up of these people from along the Durand Line. I also met them subsequently at various occasions at Peshawar and, therefore, I had also developed relatively intimate contacts with some of them.

The day that the martial law was imposed, Major General (Retd) Babar, who was the Governor of N.W.F.P, declared that he was joining the Pakistan People's Party and was arrested soon after. All these groups were in regular contact with him; Babar was their mentor. After his arrest, there was no one else that they could turn to and thus started visiting me in Rawalpindi. They had been abandoned and had no other channels of communication open to them. However, by this time I had long since left the army and told them I could hardly offer any help. Their grievances were so profound that I had to help, and hence called Lieutenant General Jamal Saeed Mian, who was the Master General of Ordnance in GHQ. Since he also belonged to the tribal territory and hence was aware of the predicament of these groups, I thought he should meet with them. He was kind enough and invited a few representatives of these groups to GHQ, which was an immense relief to me. I was, however, soon disappointed; straight from the meeting, they came back to me and started registering their protests again. They were in a predicament, no one would own them, and I was in no position to help them.

The foreign policy of Pakistan was back to its natural drift. All the initiatives and plans made by the Bhutto regime had been scrapped. Had these policy decisions been maintained and followed vigorously, my strong feeling is the events would not have unfolded in Afghanistan as they did. It was becoming crystal clear that the rulers of the time were hardly sincere to the country. To them, their interests took priority over all else. If they had pursued the path of diplomacy with Sardar Daud and through that helped bring greater political stability in Afghanistan, the Russians may never have moved in there. To them, the name of Bhutto was an enigma. Externally they rejected all his policies and internally they were hell bent upon eliminating him and all the support that he had amongst the masses. They were oblivious to all consequences. The efforts that were being made to convert the entire region into a stable bulwark of Muslim bloc were deliberately sabotaged. The stability of Afghanistan and Pakistan were interlinked. The destabilization of Afghanistan also brought in its wake a state of uncertainty and divisive tenors within Pakistan, which probably suited some other powers, but not Pakistan. Colonel Donald Blottie, who was the Army attaché in the US Embassy in Islamabad, played golf with me regularly. He had become a good friend of mine. Seeing the apathy of the Government of Pakistan in handling these groups of Mujahideen, and the lack of any policy towards Afghanistan, I suggested to him they may like to meet with them. I also suggested that such trained soldiers could prove very useful links for influencing the events within Afghanistan if required. He displayed no interest in them. Things kept drifting as usual. There was no policy, and there were no plans. These well trained, highly motivated and strong- willed groups were left rudderless.

As explained above, from 1972 to 1975 when Brigadier Babar was the IGFC at Peshawar, some bold initiatives and policies had been framed. These not only helped in integrating the tribal territory of Pakistan, but also effectively countered the Pakhtoonistan movement waged by the Afghan rulers. I resigned from the Army in July 1975, and Brigadier Babar also left his post as IGFC to take over the command of an infantry brigade at Sialkot around the same time. He later became the Governor and contributed to a lot of the development in the whole of Tribal Area. It was the time that one could travel freely and unescorted to places that had been previously described as volatile and wild areas of the tribal belt. I had also developed some contacts with the Maliks of the area, some of who developed business interests in the settled areas of Pakistan. The process of their economic integration with the mainstream economy of the country had started. Some of these Maliks kept visiting me regularly, and those still alive even now come and see me.

The links kept getting strengthened and the pace of work sped up. Babar maintained regular contact with the Maliks of the area. Bhutto was also visiting the areas the same as was done when Babar was IGFC. We surely had a policy which was showing excellent results. It continued till the army coup, after which all such operations were abandoned. Yet again there wasn't any policy in place, but now people make claims about successful Afghan policies. What policies? Can they suggest any achievements except perhaps that General Zia never visited the area even once?

Now after the events are over, General Arif and the author of "Silent Soldier" claims that against all the odds and at enormous risk to themselves, these key people in authority set the policy that laid the grounds for success in Afghanistan. Nothing could be farther away from the truth! There was no follow up with Sardar Daud to bring stability in the region. The force of 2000 Mujahideen was abandoned and they were left to drift away aimlessly and sulk in their frustrations. The regime was only interested in internally eliminating Bhutto and working on damage control from any spread of Bhuttoism after he was to be hanged. The Americans too had no other interest in the region except to follow up their covert acts to get rid of Bhutto. All the political alliances, initiatives, scheming thrusts of all their activities were directed with that intent. The policy they had for Afghanistan is a total mystery.

General K.M. Arif and all his other colleagues in the CMLA Headquarters and the DG ISI were utterly indifferent to the situation in the region.

At this stage, the Russians moved into Afghanistan. As claimed by the author, when General Zia-ul-Haq sat in his drawing room, listening to Mr Azimov, the Soviet Ambassador, he had no plan of his own; he was not even making efforts to stumble into one. It is now claimed that the Mujahideen resistance hitherto against the Communist rulers turned into an Afghan Jihad against the Soviet Union. The fundamental question is: who should be credited with this transformation? The people who had the foresight to conceive it, planned for this contingency so painstakingly, with meticulous attention to details or someone who purely through selfserving ambition or tragic accidents of history, catapulted themselves to the Office of the President of Pakistan. That they were meeting Mr Azimov and listening to him does not show that they had any hand in the planning of these events. Resistance movements are not created overnight. They require years of planning efforts and dedication. These Mujahideen leaders, after the fall of the Bhutto government, kept going from pillar to post, seeking help and assistance, but there was no response forthcoming. It is now proclaimed that Pakistan's Afghan policy was developed in the period 1978-1979. What was this policy? They throw no light on that! Was it policy that dictated that this nucleus so carefully nurtured be abandoned and allowed to fade away because of sheer frustration! Nothing worthwhile took place during this period.

Colonel Blottie and his colleague John Reagan visited my residence the day the Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan. I only learned later that this colleague was the head of the CIA cell in the US Embassy, Islamabad. They both were very excited. They asked me about the location of Gulbeddin Hikmatyar and the other groups that I had mentioned to Blottie earlier. I told them they were located at Peshawar. They requested me to get them over to Rawalpindi urgently, as they wanted to meet with them. I called some of these people the next day to my house. I introduced them all to Colonel Blottie and John Reagan. They told them that the US government would immediately take them directly under their umbrella. They also ensured me that they would take care of them and that from now onwards would deal directly with them and I need not worry about them anymore. I was happy, after a sojourn of nearly two years in isolation; they were now part of an official operative unit. The interest of our own government in them was also missing during this period, and now they too suddenly woke up to this reality and their need. It was only when the US embassy decided to support these Mujahideen that our government also became active. This, the author now describes, as the emotional conviction imbued with the fervour of Jihad that began to surge in the hearts of these Islam-loving rulers. Where was the Islamic zeal when the Palestinians were being massacred in Jordan and other decisive problems that the Muslim world faced? Was this initiative taken to kindle the fire in their hearts, and if so why did it only surface after the US acted?

It is now maintained that the actions taken were because of a mutual compatibility of interests. True, but not between the United States and Pakistan, just between the United States and the coterie of rulers. For their own survival, they embraced and followed the policy as directed and inspired by the United States. The ISI directorate had a permanent team of advisors from CIA, handling the planning of all affairs of the Afghan resistance. What were the roles of General Zia and the chief of ISI? A purely subservient role! It was only to coordinate and implement the instructions of their masters. In all fairness, Pakistan's security was also at risk when the Soviet Union moved their troops into Afghanistan. It was also our compulsion that they were kept in check. All our interests had to be dovetailed in service of the overall plans of resistance against the Soviet incursion in Afghanistan. It did not have to come at the total cost of sacrificing our own national interests.

The pity is that we undermined all our national interests and made our policies entirely subservient to the designs of the global aims that the United States had in the region. Once the Russians were defeated in Afghanistan, the Americans also lost interest in the area and severed all ties. The great protagonists of our foreign policy success also abandoned them. If the author claims that they had a policy on Afghanistan, then Pakistan should have worked to forge a greater unity within the ranks and files of these Commanders. India cleverly stepped in the vacuum created and cultivated links with people like Commander Ahmad Shah Masood, Dostum, Abdullah Abdullah and some others, who all belonged to Northern Afghanistan. With these moves, a rift was created within the ranks and files of these Afghan Commanders. India wittily developed stronger bonds with some of these Persian speaking Commanders. They had even hosted some of them during the period of Soviet occupation of their lands. Professor Burhanuddin, who was Persian speaking, was still a respected figure amongst these Mujahedeen leaders. Through some interim arrangements, it fell on him to head the Afghan government for a limited period, but he kept extending his tenure himself. This antagonised the other contenders and Commanders, in particular, the Pakhtun speaking people. While India kept pursuing their aims and designs, we abandoned all the contacts, links and bonds that we had developed over an extensive length of time.

This thesis of Pakistan’s Afghan policy and the resultant fiasco is essential in exposing all the tall claims being made and to highlight the ineptitude of our rulers and their policies.

I have at random picked some thoughts that centered on people that played pivotal roles in determining the destiny of this country. It pains one to conclude that most of what they achieved was negative and had far-reaching implications. These are some paramount examples of how this country has been betrayed by some of these people, and yet it never raised serious alarm signals, neither in the minds of those in the corridors of power nor other bystanders. They all kept silent. It is amazing that all the saner elements, be it the intellectuals, the journalists, the lawyers, the retired bureaucrats, or the retired senior personnel of the armed forces, have either all agreed with them or have remained utterly indifferent and silent. It is a terrible state of apathy. We must learn to break these shackles. In essence, it can only come if we show a stronger resolve and will to ascertain the truth and then to fearlessly and forcefully express it. The people of Pakistan must learn to stand up and be counted.

# CHAPTER 2

# MY EARLY DAYS

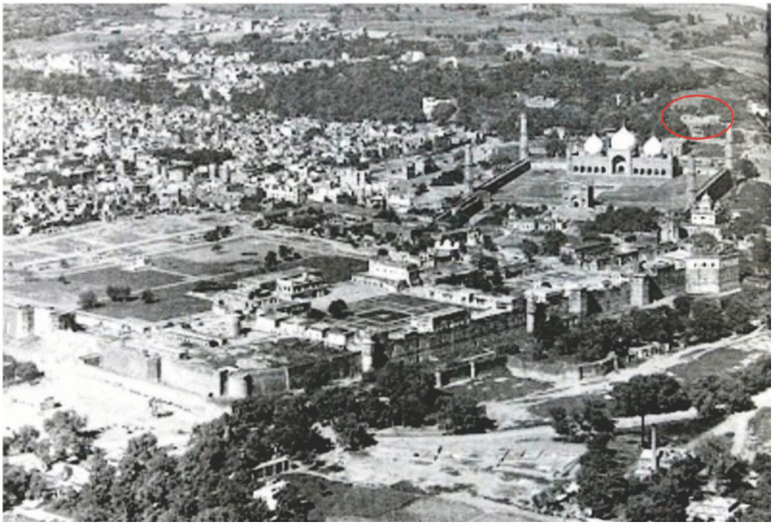
Sitting back in the twilight years of my life, I reflect on the life that I have lived. All the things I have cherished, witnessed, felt, observed and everything that I, in my humble way, have tried to achieve and accomplish. The flashbacks carry with them a bag of mixed emotions; happiness and pride tangled with the bitterness of betrayal, the regret of a directionless pursuit of megalomaniac leadership. My resolve, however, always remained steadfast. This country was founded with the blessings of Allah (SWT) and the passion and determination of its people. That it will endure and overcome any challenges and setbacks it faces is something that I have the firmest faith in as I near the end of my journey. Of course, mere idle day dreaming will not bring a change. For that, we need to shake away our apathy and show firm resolve to take action. Allama Iqbal has rightly described it as:-

عمل سے زندگی بنتی ہے جنت بھی جہنم بھی
یہ خاکی اپنی فطرت میں نہ نوری ہے نہ ناری ہے

I have endeavored to follow this and act on it. This should be the pursuit and end purpose of our lives. I have implicit and strong faith in that. I am convinced that this is the path that one must walk and the purpose for which one must live.

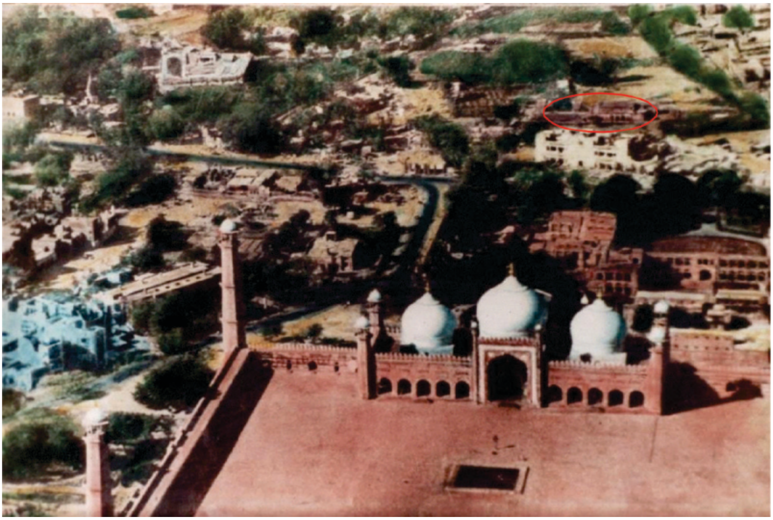
It became apparent to me, through observing my grandfather as a child, that association with anyone who did not measure up to one's standards and values should be avoided. Whether I lived up to this, I cannot say, but I have tried to live my life with this as my guiding principle.

What my generation experienced was unique. Not only did we witness the creation of a country, but we had the honour and privilege of playing a role in its emergence. A nation came into existence after great struggle and enormous sacrifices. Muslims, stretching from the South of India in the State of Hyderabad Deccan, to the Pamir Mountains in the North West of India, all shared a transcendent connection to a cause which was ultimately bigger than each one of them. We saw an unprecedented level of hope, enthusiasm and spirit.



The circle indicates the house I was born in on 16th Dec, 1929.

This Aerial Picture was taken in 1930



The Aerial Picture was taken by author in 1951

Yet now we stand as mere spectators, silently watching the society that we built with the highest of expectations digress into something which is barely recognizable. Unique is, therefore, an apt description for us. The generation before us was fortunate enough not to live much beyond the dream of independence, it was their fate to be spared the agony of witnessing the degeneration of their dream just as it was our misfortune to live through it. The newer generation did not experience the motivation and the driving spirit that successfully culminated in achieving a homeland for Muslims of India. They saw a new country embroiled in all kinds of problems soon into its infancy. And all the subsequent generations have grown in an atmosphere of perpetual uncertainty. I have hope, however, that they still have the faith that they will triumph over all these difficulties, tribulations and despondency.

I wish that this background did not paint as dismal and gloomy a picture as I fear it had! We have failed to give the emerging generation a solid platform to build towards a stable, viable, progressive and prosperous Pakistan. The present generation must take it upon themselves to learn from our mistakes and avoid them, but more so, to build on what structure we will be leaving behind.

It is amidst this background that my mind flashes back to my childhood. I had my primary education at Government School outside Masti Gate. I later joined Central Model School, Lahore. I was an eleven-year-old boy, and I was having the privilege of sitting in the Pindal of the famous meeting in Minto Park, Lahore on March 23, 1940. To articulate the profundity of what I felt as I sat there and listened to the speeches would be tough. Quaid-e-Azam stood very tall and dignified and thundered in a very precise tone, his demand for the creation of Pakistan. He was a towering personality, and I looked at him with great admiration and adulation. His words still reverberate in my mind. It only seems like yesterday that he echoed; “Mussalmans are a nation, and a nation must have its boundaries.”

While growing up in Lahore, which was a Muslim Majority Province, I still recall clearly as to how Muslims were kept deprived and underprivileged. Mostly the Hindus dominated all the business. They were the major philanthropists. In industry only they featured prominently. Even in education, they were way ahead of the Muslims. Some idea can be gauged from my experience of admission in the college. It was in 1943 that I completed my Matriculation from Central Model School, Lahore. I got First Division and was optimistic that I would surely obtain admission in Government College, Lahore, which was a premier institution not only in Punjab but the whole of India. I was but a mere thirteen-year-old boy when I appeared for my interview. At the head of the table which formed the board, sat Mr G.D. Sondhi, who was the Principal of the college. He was accompanied by six other very dignified and impressive Senior Professors. I stood there meekly, shrinking before this impressive and intimidating group of people. Suddenly, I heard Mr Sondhi speak out, "Young man, I am sorry there are no more vacancies left in the admissions for the first year class." I stood speechless and perplexed. Suddenly, while looking at the admission form, he read out, "I see that your father was an old student of the college." I felt somewhat reassured. "Yes, sir," I replied in a meek voice. The Principal was now turning over the other pages of my application. He suddenly got excited and said, "I see your grandfather is an alumnus and your elder brother is currently in his Second Year." Before I could digest the significance of these remarks, I saw that he had already risen from his chair and was extending his hand towards me. Speaking now in a softer and more affectionate tone, he remarked, "Who has the heart to say no to you?" I was slightly taken aback, but immediately felt a wave of relief flood the insides of my chest. I reciprocated his gesture and shook hands with him, then proceeded to leave the room blessed with the comfort of knowing that I had been granted a place at one of the most prestigious institutions in India.

From 1943 to 1947, I remember mostly spending my time with my friends, sat on the steps that overlooked the Oval in Government College. We talked about a variety of things, but looking back only the thoughts we shared about the future of our nation are the ones that I hold dear. From that group of friends, I can recall Chief Justice (Retd.) Naseem Hassan Shah, Syed Munir Hussan Shah (Ex- Secretary, Ministry of Information), Masood Zaman (Ex-Secretary, Ministry of Commerce), Riaz Ahmad, Kanwar Eizazullah, Vice Admiral (Retd) Fazal Janjua, Major General (Retd) Azhar Ali Syed , Group Captain (Retd) Amirullah Khan Awan and Adnan Sheikh. We all fondly remember the days of G.D. Sondhi, Dickenson and A.S. Bokhari as being our Principal's during the period. They all made our Alma Mater stand out as a beacon of light. The standards of academic excellence, as well as ancillary activities, were truly unrivaled in those days. This can best be judged because the induction of into the most prestigious service of ICS, had the maximum representation proportionately from this institution. The admission in the college was most competitive and was primarily on merits. Even then, however, despite the fact that it was a Muslim majority province, out of a total of 100 students that were selected only 26 were Muslim. That shows the value of education among the Muslim boys. A few seats were reserved for nomination by Chief Minister. One of my friends from the seventh grade, Mian Zia-ud-din, availed this elitist route to admission in the College. He was made to share my bench by our seventh-grade teacher Master Taliah Mand while at Central Model School, in the fervent hope that he may benefit from my company. His father Mian Zahur-ud-din had died and his uncle Mian Amir-ud-din was his guardian. Soon after Zia joined me in my class, Mian Amir-ud-din came to see my grandfather. I was overwhelmed to hear his uncle's faith in the strength of my character as he expressed to me his notion that through spending time with me, his nephew's character and subsequent results will improve and help him complete his matriculation alongside me. He proved correct; Zia passed his matriculation but secured a Third Division in the results. When we came to the college for the interview for admission, Zia kept waiting for the fate of my application. As I came out of the room after my interview before the board, he was intriguingly engrossed in my story of the interlude. When I finished, he seemed rather disillusioned and felt that with his third division results he had no chance. So he left without appearing before the board. But his uncle got him nominated from the Chief Minister's quota. I felt happy knowing that another one of my friends was joining me alongside the two (Nasim Hassan and Riaz Ahmed) that already were. But I was soon disappointed. He rapidly lost all interest in his education and often wasted his time playing cards in some corner of the Oval. I tried to persuade him but to no avail. I recently met his son, Qasim Zia, and narrated the entire story to him about his father. He was bemused.

To this day, I am proud of the fact how this premier institution had helped build the character, will, and the desire to triumph in its students. It made the atmosphere truly enthralling. The teaching faculty composed of people who were open- minded, welcoming and always willing to entertain meaningful and honest discussions. Many memories come to mind, but I would narrate one to illustrate the point. A group of us were sitting on the steps of the open air theater, and our Principal A.S. Bokhari just walked over and sat with us. To engage us in a discussion he asked, "Don't you think that this theater should have a name?" In our relaxed and somewhat callous style, we opined that there is no need for that to which he smiled and said, "In foreign countries, even a dog has a name, and you don't want to give this culturally significant place a name?" So in harmony, we all agreed.

Another aspect of the institution was the spirit, camaraderie and unity amongst all the students. It had no class or other distinctions of religious rivalry or animosity. I remember once during a turbulent period of political instability, a Hindu mob entered the premises of the College and broke the window panes and ripped off the curtains in the main hall. Then-principal, Mr Bokhari, called all the students in the hall and admonished them. I can still feel the emotion that he exhumed that day, "Before your very eyes, the window panes were broken and the curtains were torn in this noble institution where your fathers and forefathers had studied before you." The feeling of guilt and shame that had filled me, I shared with everyone present inside the hall, including the Hindu and Sikh students.

It was in October 1947 that I took the unexpected decision to join the Army. This decision came with a passion, the same we had seen in the struggle for the creation of Pakistan. Hence we had no inhibitions, and that became our guideline and it became a symbol for us to follow.

## CHAPTER 3

# PAKISTAN MILITARY ACADEMY THE PIONEERING DAYS

As mentioned earlier, I joined the army soon after the partition. A group of our friends from Government College, Lahore applied for this assignment during the period of Oct-Nov 1947. We had the preliminary selection board at Lahore. After passing that, I was called in front of the Inter-Services Selection Board at Rawalpindi. Colonel Ali Noon was the President of the board. He was the brother- in-law of Hamid Ali Noon, an acquaintance from college, and a friend of my uncle, Brigadier (Retd.) Mian Bashir. While selecting me, he suggested that the Pakistan Air Force course had already started at Risalpur and that if I was keen to join the Air Force, I could go there directly. But joining the Army was my passion, and so I opted for that, getting selected for the First PMA Long Course. Only graduates were being picked for the PMA Short course, and even though I had given my BA examination, the results had not been announced, and so I was put in the long course. It was on January 18, 1948, that we arrived at the PMA for the start of our fresh life and a new beginning for this wonderful institution. Having gathered at the Rawalpindi Railway Station, we took a train journey to Havelian. On alighting from the train, we were loaded in the Army 3 Ton vehicles; it was our first bumpy ride in these most uncomfortable vehicles, with many more to come in our later military life. On arrival at the PMA, we were received by the newly raised staff and 66 Gentlemen Cadets, who had earlier arrived from the Indian Military Academy, where they had undergone 8 months of training. This batch was since known as the IMA/PMA Course. On our arrival, they carried out the normal ragging of us the juniors. We took it in the right spirit. This was the beginning of my new life in the Service of the Army, and it started at PMA. It was really a humble beginning. The partition of the sub-continent also involved the division of Armed Forces. The Muslim officers and soldiers who had opted for Pakistan moved to their new homeland. There was also a sizeable component of the Muslim Instructional staff and cadets at the Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, who were transferred to Pakistan. The Pakistan Military Academy opened on January 26, 1948, with 209 Cadets.

| **Course Number** | **Strength** |
|---|---|
| Ex-IMA (IMA/PMA) Course | 66 |
| Ist PMA short Course | 63 |
| Ist PMA Long Course | 80 |
| **Total** | **209** |

Formal commencement of training at PMA started on January 26, 1948. However, the official establishment came two days later on January 28, 1948. Colonel (Later Brigadier) Ingell, the Commandant, delivered a brief speech to welcome the cadets:-

"We are a new institution in a new Army. In Pakistan, we have the finest military material and we will build our own traditions, which will be second to none. Your country has done you the greatest honour in accepting you as potential officers. You must strain every nerve to prove worthy of that honour. Our aim is to make the Pakistan Military Academy the first, most modern and up-to-date establishment in the world."

The faculty of instructors was raised from amongst those who arrived from Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun, and others selected from different other units. We must place on record the excellent jump start that this team of dedicated, highly motivated and inspiring instructors gave to this new but key institution being raised to build the emerging Pakistan Army. They may have lacked in the years of their experience in service, but their spirit at work more than made up this relative handicap. They all stood out tall.

This was the start of my life in the army. It was truly a very humble beginning. PMA was in the same barracks where the Italian POWs had been held in WW-II. When we got there, a setup had already been created, and the academy was organised into a battalion. It was distinguished being called the First Quaid-e-Azam's Battalion. It was classified into two companies, namely the Khalid Company and the Tariq Company. The total number of Cadets was 209, out of which 66 of those who had come from IMA, Dehra Dun, and were named IMA/ PMA course. The other course was named as first PMAShort Course. This had 63 Cadets, who were all graduates and had been selected for the PMA. The non-graduate students chosen for the PMA were grouped in the first PMA Long Course. The strength of this course was 80 Cadets. The IMA/PMA course and the first PMA Short Course were to have a year's training at PMA Kakul. The first Long Course was to undergo the full two years training period at the academy. This was thus the real pioneer course of the PMA, Kakul. It is rightfully being considered and recognized as such.

I was posted to number 5 Platoon in Tariq Company, with a group of 39 other Cadets.

At the PMA the forlorn barracks constructed of rag tag wooden material were not very inspiring. It was a camp for the Italian prisoners of war and had been hastily turned into a living area and also the training facility of this most important military institution in the country. It did not dampen our spirits and minds. It is not the lack of grandeur of the buildings, its impressive parade grounds and other facilities at this newly chosen home for PMA, that mattered. It was the will, determination, zeal, grit and the ambitious vision of the inhabitants of this modest place that was of paramount importance. In this we all were not found lacking. From the dusty parade ground, makeshift class rooms, stony play grounds and modest living accommodation, we made the proud beginning. With our own hands we cleared the stones from the playgrounds, removed the ugliness of the area and started giving the place the look and the glamor that it deserved. We could only make a beginning. And we did it with our sweat and toil.

When we began at the PMA, we had to start from scratch. Our uniforms were scrappy, and the caps we were provided with made us look ridiculous. We began calling these “Chapatti Caps.” This name remained stuck and became famous.

We settled in our new life rather smoothly. For those of us, who were coming straight from civilian institutions, the change in atmosphere and life was significant. In Government College, we had lived in an unusually uninhibited style. It was a unique system which instilled actual values within its students. There was openness, a mutual trust and faith. What we shared was not a narrow-minded vision, but a very broad, rational, and open-minded approach was developed.

The new life in PMA immediately lay bare some contradictions. The overall first impression was that the pattern being inculcated in PMA was not natural. Of course, there was a significant regimentation, but one considered this to be essential. Senior cadets were hazing juniors, which was understandable, since these traditions were inherited from the Indian Military Academy and were now being passed on to PMA. One endured these patiently, in a light mood and with no acrimony. Another very striking contrast from the atmosphere in the college, to the one that one felt prevalent at PMA, was a general air of artificiality. One could not, however, reconcile this with the rigid and unbridled way in which this was imposed. It was inspired by instinct and a desire to show off. In fact, it often felt like the ends justifying the means approach was the underlying principle here; the only motivation factor was obtainment of grades, regardless of how they were attained.

The Cadets at PMA came from three different backgrounds. The IMA/ PMA batch had gone through this transition at IMA. The rest of the Cadets had two different schooling models behind them. There were some who had been educated at the institutions like the Royal Indian Military College, Dehra Dun, and the King George's Royal Military Colleges, at different locations, or even Doon School, Dehra Dun. These two either had an entire military system or maybe only partially military system of education. They also had developed a phobia of grading conscientiousness. To us coming straight from civilian institutions, this seemed rather strange. We could not readily adapt to it. In fact, in retrospect, I feel that even till the fag end of my career; I had not fully reconciled to this.

Right from our early days in PMA, we were looking for like-minded people to associate with. Our group of close friends comprised Hamid Ali Noon, Rab Nawaz, Prince Saif-ur- Rehman (Mehter of Chitral) and me. Izzat Hayat Khan, who was a family friend of Hamid's, was from RIMC, but later preferred to socialise with us rather than associate with his other colleagues of RIMC. He became our Senior Gentleman Cadet (SGC). This appointment was rotational, and each appointment lasted for a short period. It resulted in a few skirmishes between our group, the first of which was between him, Rab Nawaz and me. Our Platoon was participating in a marching drill under SGC Izzat Hayat when suddenly we heard his loud voice saying, "Come along now, Mahmud and Rab Nawaz march properly.." Taken aback by this abrupt comment, Rab Nawaz and I instinctively retorted with a shut up simultaneously. We soon realised that Izzat had said this upon seeing one instructor, Captain Baig, to cozy up to him and hence improve his grades. I was made to go before our Company Commander, Major Bilgrami. As I stood before him, he was chiding me for my defiant attitude. He told me that it was only his fondness for me and the fact that he knew my uncle, Brigadier (Retd) Mian Bashir that stopped him from taking a more stringent notice of this serious offence. I relaxed a bit after hearing this, thinking that I had gotten away scot-free, but the Commander followed up by handing the highest possible sentence i.e. a 14-days restriction. Fortunately, this was the last time that I was punished. Izzat was moderately utilitarian in his approach, therefore did not suffer from qualms of conscience for picking on his two good friends. It would not have mattered had his critique been valid, but we did not seem to have been guilty of anything. This attitude, however, was normal and even encouraged, and this brought me much discomfort. In the evening, when we went to Izzat's room to take up cudgel with him, he made his apologies and the squabble was sorted there and then. The impression it made, however, was something that stayed with me.

Major (Later Major General) Bilgrami lived up to his words. He always showed a liking and fondness towards me. He was our Commandant at the Staff College, Quetta, and as VCGS he was in control of the Army Aviation units that I served in. Our relationship extended beyond the confines of our professions, and we often met under more social pretexts. I am grateful that he held me in high opinion and esteem. He was an excellent example of a gentleman and a professional soldier, and I always respected him for his advice and guidance provided to me.

One of the cadets Asghar Ali Jilani had joined us directly from United Kingdom. He had been educated there and spoke English and hardly knew Urdu. He was now beginning to learn it and started to speak broken Urdu. He had served there in the Royal Air Force and though he knew the discipline of the Services, but at PMA he was not practicing it and was often seen on restrictions as punishment for some of the offences that he would commit. He was a very interesting character and was very jovial. Soon while we were settling down to our new life in PMA, he had a novel idea; to form a club of those cadets who seemed to be rather disinterested in staying on in PMA due to the new regimentation that we were going through. He called this club as Couldn't Pull On Club (CPO). Eight of us were the basic members of this new and unique club. They were namely, Cadet A.A.Jilani, Cadet Saif-ur-Rahman (Mehtar of Chitral), Cadet Hamid Ali Noon, Cadet Izzat Hayat Khan, Cadet Rab Nawaz Khan, Cadet Asad Khan, Cadet Abdullah Al Saeed (He had come from IMA, and was from the Royal family of Muscat) and I. A.A.Jilani was the leader of this club, and his most famous act was that while we were on parade, he would quietly utter something funny, which would make some other cadets around him suddenly burst out in laughter. Immediately, our Regimental Sergeant Major Duffield would pick them and put them on charge, for which they were punished. We the members were already briefed about it, and so would remain serious and always got away with this act of Jilani. Our Course mates got to know this trick, and had to undergo punishments on account of this, but they never reported the matter to the authorities in PMA. That was the Esprit de corps of the course. Some members resigned while still in the Academy, some others resigned soon after getting the Commission, and I was the only one who followed a normal career in the Army, but I too ultimately resigned. Thus the traditions of the club were maintained.

Another incident that stands out in my mind is another reflection of the same self-serving attitude that was prevalent among Cadets. Some Cadets had absented themselves from PMA and came over to Rawalpindi for a weekend. The group was led by Cadet Nazir Ahmad from the IMA/PMA Course. In their absence, some of his course mates took up the matter with their instructors, who were unaware of this, which led to Nazir being tried and then expelled from the PMA. It was the first case of its kind, and it was only because of the animosity that was created by the atmosphere here. The group of students who had complained to the instructors only did so because Nazir was believed to have obtained the best grading and report from IMA. He stood out to be the best out of his batch that had come to PMA and suffered only because of that. I thought this to be repulsive. I could not comprehend this lack of character! Two cadets of our course, namely Mahmud Kureshi and Vahidy were also a part of this unauthorised absence from the PMA, but none from our course went about reporting this.

These incidents seemed to reflect a certain demeanour that was prevalent here. Personal ambitions and desires of an individual took priority over the goals of a group, and so people were interested only in themselves and not the collective. Notions of morality and camaraderie were fleeting amongst these Gentlemanly cadets.

I maintained my attitude of restricting myself to a small group of friends. Izzat Hayat Khan, Rab Nawaz Khan and Prince Saif-el-Rehman, all found their way out of PMA. From Tariq Company, I moved on to Qasim Company. Captain (later Lieutenant General) Abdul Majeed Malik remained our Platoon Commander. Major (later Colonel) S.G. Mehdi became our Company Commander. He was earlier the Adjutant of PMA.

My close group of friends now was Aziz-ur-Rahman, Abdullah Malik, Muzaffar Malik and Hamid Ali Noon. The piece of advice that I was getting was why I was too selective about the Company that I keep! Why don’t you mix with others! Was the constant query. My answer as always was that I want to associate with only like- minded people. Many names were suggested, but I always felt very strongly that I could meet only those that I felt at ease or comfortable with.

Hamid Ali and I used to come to Rawalpindi fairly regularly over the weekends. We would visit Colonel Ali Noon's house, which was located at the Peshawar Road, just opposite to the then Race Course. On Sunday, we were welcomed for lunch, which was attended by many other guests, mostly senior Army Officers, some of whom we met on many such occasions. Major General Ayub Khan (later Field Marshal), Major General Raza, Major General Sher Ali and some others were regular visitors for lunch. As Cadets, we had the experience of associating with them informally and in a very relaxed atmosphere. They would engage themselves in very lighthearted discussions and would also encourage us to take part in that. We felt totally at ease and mixed with them with no inhibitions. We did not seem to be overawed by their ranks and had no complex. The routine was that after the lunch, the whole group would move over to the races and enjoy the afternoon there. One such occasion I remember vividly. Hamid and I had taken up the matter of our seniority as we sat with Major General Sher Ali, at the races. During the discussions, we had taken up the questions of our seniority viz-a-viz for those who had joined OTS. We were telling him that after we had joined Ist PMA Long Course, GHQ had also started the First OTS course at Kohat. These courses gave temporary commissions, and the duration was six months. We explained to him the anomaly that these Cadets had joined OTS Kohat after we joined PMA, but as our course was of 2 years duration, they would get their commission earlier than us. The question that we were addressing to him was, how the seniority will be adjusted? Promptly, he replied that it would be the date of the commission which will determine the seniority. We were totally surprised at that answer. Very vehemently and forcefully we kept arguing that it was not fair. We had joined PMA before they started their training at OTS, and since their course was of 6 months only and they would get their commission before us, and would thus be senior to us. Despite the best of our efforts, we failed to convince him. We were rather amazed at his attitude. We did our best that we could, but he was not persuaded. This makes all the more befuddling that he could change his mind later. Regardless, GHQ ultimately fixed our seniority from date of joining PMA and OTS and not from our date of commission. We felt happy and redeemed.

There was a string of regular visitors to PMA. General Gracey, the Commander-in-Chief, was among these regulars. When he arrived on March 9, 1948, he articulated his assessments in the following words: "I was very impressed with what I saw. The institution has been established on solid foundations, and a steady supply of officers for the Pakistan Army is assured."

This visit also formalised arguably the most important event to come in the history of the PMA; the formal inauguration of the Pakistan Military Academy, which was to be conducted by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah. It was scheduled for April 15, 1948. There was a buzz of excitement all around. Unfortunately, because of the deteriorating health of Mr Jinnah, the event had to be postponed twice, and eventually dropped altogether. Despite the prayers of the entire nation, the Quaid passed away on September 11, 1948. While the Quaid was planning to own us as his own Battalion, the Almighty ordained it otherwise. The Quaid could not do it in his own lifetime. His sad death had rendered us orphans. I remember the emotional address that our commandant, Brigadier Ingell, gave. Although we shared this monumental loss with the entire nation, to us it seemed much more personal. He had graciously agreed to name PMA as 1st Quaid-e-Azam's own Battalion. He never lived to visit us, and we were also deprived of the privilege of being honoured by his visit. A formal 40 Days mourning was announced by the Commandant and were duly observed.

Captain (Later Lieutenant General) Malik Abdul Majeed was our Platoon Commander and Major (Later Major General) Abid Ali Bilgrammi was our company commander. I have fond memories of their advice and guidance to me even beyond the confines of PMA, and in the later stages of my military career.

The most important event of the second term was the graduation ceremony of IMA/PMA Course and the 1st PMA Short Course, which was due in November 1948. It was, therefore, decided that both the Inauguration Ceremony and the Graduation Parade be combined and held on November 25, 1948. This day became a landmark day in the Academy's history. Khawaja Nazimuddin, the Governor General of Pakistan, was invited to grace the occasion.

The 25th of November 1948 was a day both for fulfillment and commitment to the military duty and national honor. The Passing Out Parade also included the Presentation of Quaid-e-Azam's Banner to the 1st Pakistan Battalion (Quaid-e- Azam's own- a title conferred by the Quaide-Azam), the First Sword of Honor to the best all-rounder graduating cadet and the Norman Gold Medal to the graduating cadet who secured the first position in the Academic subjects.

To our great happiness and pride, Madr-e-Millat Fatima Jinnah arrived for a visit to the PMA on May 23, 1949. It symbolized the fulfillment of the desire and the wish of the founder of this Nation, Quaid-e-Azam, to personally come, own this Battalion and to declare it as the Quaid–e-Azam's Own and to award the 1st Battalion with this Banner. It was a most profound emotional experience for us and we are equally sure for Miss Jinnah too. No other occasion in the History of PMA had ever had such significance, nostalgic feelings and attachments as this. No other event ever after, in all the annals of times to come, can have the same meaning, importance and sentimental significance. It was and will remain unique in our spirits and emotions.

On arrival at the PMA she was received by the Commandant and his staff officers and was taken around the entire complex of PMA. She visited the classrooms where the Cadets were studying, the Cadet's messes, their living areas, the hospital and the Child Welfare Centre. In Khalid Company, she saw the Quaid-e-Azam's Banner and took a personal interest in it. This was the Banner that the Quaid was so keen to confer on PMA with his own hands. It is, and will remain, the most Cherished Banner in the history of PMA and this Army.

Another significant occasion that comes to mind was the visit of Major General Akbar Khan, who gave an address. He was also known as General Tariq, a nickname he had adopted during the operations that he had carried out in Kashmir. He had led the fight for liberation and freedom from the rule of the Maharaja. He was credited with the capture of the famous Pandu feature. In his address, he described the details of those operations; the hallmark being the one in Beri Pattan. This operation was conceived by Major General Tottenham, the GOC 7 Division. Under the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, General Messervy, no British Officers could take part in the ongoing war inside the occupied area of Jammu & Kashmir. Major General Tottenham visited the area of Beri Pattan incognito and conducted all planning related to this assault on his own accord. The operation began with massive artillery bombardment in the area, which led the Indians to retreat and vacate the area. At that time Pandit Nehru, went rushing to the United Nations, asking for the Cease Fire. Major General Akbar complained when, at this critical stage, PM Liaquat Ali Khan gave the orders for the troops not to advance and a cease-fire was accepted. In a very critical tone he summed up that the wars cannot be fought by armchair politicians sitting in the comfort of their offices. They are fought by the soldiers at the battlefield, looking in the eyes of the enemy. The initiative should be left to the commanders in the field; he kept exclaiming! Later Major General Akbar and our Deputy Commandant Colonel Latif were involved in the famous Attock Conspiracy. They along with some others were tried and punished.

Our course was now gradually coming to the end of our training period. It was our last exercise, and it was organised on the pattern of Exercise "Chindit," as a carry-over from IMA. We were to move from Tret, along the road to Murree, to Havelian. This was to be undertaken during a pitched dark night and the terrain was all mountainous. There were hardly any visible tracks, leave alone the roads. To make this journey, we were to move in small groups of three. On reaching Havelian, we were to again form into a Platoon, and Cadet Asad Khan was nominated to be our Platoon Commander. As we were leaving for this arduous journey, we informally consulted amongst ourselves. We decided that after starting the leg in groups of three, we should all get together and undertake the trip as a Platoon. At Tret our instructors launched us as per the plan. After some distance, as we had agreed, we formed into full Platoon and proceeded towards our destination. It was cold, and en route we found an abandoned cave. We stopped there for our dinner. As we finished our meals, Cadet Asad Khan, on his own, assumed command of the Platoon. He started ordering around. He told Tiwana and me to clean up the place. We had to tell him to shut up and mind his own business. We were not under the discipline of the Platoon. This position of Platoon Commander was to only come to him on reaching Havelian.

When we arrived at PMA, Cadet Asad Khan reported the matter to the Junior Under Officer (JUO) of the company, Tariq Mir. I was put on charge. This was the second time that I was being marched in before the Company Commander on a charge. Major S.G. Mehdi was our Company Commander. As I stood in front of him in his office, the JUO read the charge sheet. Suddenly Major Mehdi took over the charge Book and threw it out of the door of the room. He asked the JUO to leave. He ordered me to stand at ease. Then addressing me, he said, I am not Major S.G. Mehdi. You should not consider yourself to be Gentleman Cadet Mahmud. I am just Mehdi, your elder brother, and you are my younger brother. I was suddenly taken aback by this dramatic gesture. Major Mehdi told me he had been taking a very keen personal interest in my activities. "There is something that suggests to me I should watch your progress very closely. I will follow your career and will keep monitoring it." He said it very sincerely, and I appreciated his advice. Of immediate interest was that I was not awarded any punishment. Major (Later Colonel) S.G. Mehdi did to some extent follow my career in the Army. But his career, which was very promising at one time, came to a rather unceremonious end during the 1965 war. I will refer to it later.

The most exciting time of our stay in PMA was suddenly coming very close. We soon were beginning to realise that our dreams and hopes, with which we had arrived at PMA, were about to be realised and fulfilled. The date, the 4th of February, 1950, was fixed for our graduation parade. We were equally thrilled to learn that the Prime Minister, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan would be reviewing this 3rd Governor General's Parade. For us, it was a historic event. It had assumed three- fold significance. For the first time, the Prime Minister of Pakistan was to be the reviewing officer. Second, for the first time in the history of PMA, the consecration of the colours ceremony would be performed. Third, the first regular course trained entirely at the PMA would be graduating. The Prime Minister, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, had arrived at the PMA a day earlier. He and his party were the guests of the Commandant for dinner. Brigadier Ingell recalls the account of that meeting and the dinner with the Prime Minister:-

"My cook produced an excellent dinner and all was going well when the Prime Minister turned to me and said, "Tell me Brigadier Ingell, what I shall be required to do tomorrow?" I gave him the rough sketch of the timing and what should happen when he reached the parade ground. Then I said, "When the time comes to present the colours, I will escort you forward, together with the Cadet Battalion Commander, the Commanderin-Chief and the RSM. There two colours, the Regimental Colour and the King's Colour" The Prime Minister suddenly choked, his face turning purple. "Brigadier Ingell! Are you seriously telling me that you expect me to present a King's colour? I would remind you that this is Pakistan, a sovereign state, and we have no allegiance to the King." Needless to say, after this the soufflé was as flat as last week's rice pudding. As soon as the dinner was over, I told the Battalion Commander to get the colours up to my house quickly. In very short order, Mr Duffield and the Battalion Adjutant appeared, with two staff sergeants carrying the cased colours. Mr Duffield proceeded to reveal the standards in my drawing room. I did my best to explain the reason for the presence of the King's Colours, that it had been approved by someone in the Ministry of Defense, but the PM was not to be persuaded. He grunted something unintelligible and then said: "I am not going to present that flag tomorrow, or to anyone, in Pakistan." I was absolutely shattered. It was 9:30 in the evening and the ceremony was due to commence at 9 AM the next morning. Mr Duffield was marvelous. "Not to worry, sir. I'll have it all squared up by parade time." He and the Adjutant and the colours disappeared into the darkness.

Mr Duffield rose to the occasion, as usual. As soon as he left me, he went to his office, sketched out the amended drill for the presentation of the Battalion Colours only. He had the colour party at the parade at 6.00 a.m. for rehearsal, and by the time the real thing took place, all went without a hitch. The rejected King's Colour rested in the halfway of my house for some weeks, and then I took it back to the GHQ and handed it over to Major Wilson, the Chief's Military Secretary. I do not know what happened to it, but I have often regretted not keeping it as a memento of my early days at the Pakistan Military Academy."

It was a grey morning, but the drill square was enlivened with a spectacle of colours and sounds. The grand function was attended by the members of the central government, the provincial governments, and many distinguished visitors and guests from the armed forces and the diplomatic corps. Some three thousand spectators watched the parade. Before the ceremony, the spectators witnessed an impressive display by massed bands and were entertained by music performed by some three hundred pipers and drummers.

The service started as the 1st Pakistan Battalion (Quaid-e-Azam's own) marched on parade under the command of Regimental Sergeant Major V.C. Duffield, led by the Champion Company (Khalid)followed byTariq, Qasim and Salahuddin. The Under Officers took up their appointed positions. The Battalion was drawn up, resplendent in their white ceremonial equipment, with their regimental plumes; The Adjutant rode on his white charger and stood in front of the Battalion. For the first time, the parade was commanded from horseback, as was done at Sandhurst. A new tradition was set. Facing the Battalion was the saluting dais, draped in red carpet, and gaily decorated with the pennants of the formations and divisions which had taken part in World War-II.

In the centre of the dais, the Pakistan flag was ready to be unfurled on the arrival of the Prime Minister. Next, the Quaid-e-Azam's Banner was brought with due solemnity. After that, the parade was received by the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel (Later Lieutenant General) Akhtar Ali Malik and the Commandant Brigadier Ingell.

At 10:30 am the Prime Minister of Pakistan, accompanied by the Commander-in-Chief of the Pakistan Army, General Sir Douglas Gracey arrived at the rare of the saluting dais and was received by the Commandant, the Chief Instructor, and the Battalion Commander.

The Prime Minister then ascended the saluting dais, and the parade presented him a General Salute. The Adjutant moved up on his bay horse, saluted the Prime Minister and reported: "The Battalion is present and ready for inspection, sir." The Prime Minister inspected the parade walking down its ranks. He returned to the dais, and five drummers came forward smartly, piled their drums in a little pyramid. The new Regimental Colour was uncased and laid on the side of the drums. The Commandant then asked Lieutenant Colonel M.M. Ahmed, Chief Education Officer, to consecrate the Colours. He led the Battalion in a prayer that infested the occasion with a serenity of an Islamic Ceremony. Since then no consecration ceremony has been conducted in such an elaborate manner. He invoked the blessings of Allah on the Colours and read out the prayers. It was followed by a dedication and oath of allegiance. The troops were then called to attention, and Lieutenant Colonel Ahmed laying his hands on the Colours recited the verses of Holy Quran. After the recitation of the Holy Quran, he continued to invoke the blessing of Allah. After the consecration, the colours were formally presented. The Under Officers from the colour party were called forward, and the senior under Officer handed the Regimental Colours to the Prime Minister who placed the flagpole in the belt of the Junior Under Officer who knelt before him to receive the Colours. The Commandant then addressed the Prime Minister and the parade and accepted the Colours on behalf of the Pakistan Military Academy. Holding the Colours aloft, the Colour Party joined the Battalion who paid their respect with a General Salute. The Prime Minister then presented the Quaid-e-Azam's Banner to Khalid Company which had retained this honour from the previous term. The Champions then escorted Quaid-e- Azam's Banner and trooped it in slow time through the ranks of the Battalion from left to right resuming their place of honour to the right of the Battalion. Then, as a compliment to the Prime Minister, the Parade advanced in Review Order and presented the General Salute. After this, the Adjutant handed over the Parade to the senior under Officer Raja Aziz Bhatti. The Adjutant rode off, dismounted and presented himself at the saluting dais The Battalion Senior under Officer ordered the Battalion to form into columns of half companies, keeping the Regimental Colours in the forefront. The Battalion then marched past the Saluting Dais in their entire splendour with the Regimental Colours and Quaid-e-Azam's Banner flying. After this, the Battalion formed a hollow square. The Prime Minister, followed by the Commander-in-Chief, the Commandant, the Battalion Commander and the Adjutant walked up to the Battalion to make the presentations of the awards. The Prime Minister then conferred the insignia of MBE (Member of the British Empire) on Regimental Sergeant Major Duffield and his predecessor in the office

Subedar Major Lehrasab Khan,13 Frontier Force Rifles. The Sword of Honor and the Norman Award were given to Senior under Officer Raja Aziz Bhatti.

On conclusion of the presentation ceremony, the Prime Minister addressed the Parade: “I am glad to be able, on my first official visit to the Academy, to present the Colours. The flag is the emblem of honour for this Academy, and the spirit of nobility is enshrined in its folds. I have committed this flag to your faithful keeping. Let it be your symbol and inspiration for the future.

The Pakistan Military Academy was just two years old last week. As compared to other world academies, ours is still in its infancy, but we have made a good start and laid down foundations. We have the material, and above all, we have the spirit, the traditions and ideals of Islam. But in modern warfare that spirit and those ideals must be harnessed in light with professional knowledge and technique of the highest order to enable you to protect the honour of your country.

We have fought for and created Pakistan, not merely because we wanted to have the satisfaction of calling ourselves independent, but because we have a particular mission. That mission is to build a society where not only the material needs of the people are satisfied, but their yearning for a spiritual life is also fulfilled.”

After the speech, the Prime Minister returned to the saluting dais. The Senior Division was ordered by the new Battalion Senior Under Officer to take his position at the rear of the Battalion. Following the Regimental Colours, the Senior Division marched off in slow time to the tune of Auld Lang Syne. As they slowly climbed the steps, the Battalion presented arms to the Regimental Colours and showed their respect to the passing out cadets. Every step we took, our resolve kept strengthening and climaxed on reaching the top. It was one of steadfastness, unbridled commitment to the dignity and the honour of this Army and our country, and above all our pledge to defend this at the peril of our careers or even our lives. Most of us have abided and lived up to it. A brief account of our course history may adequately prove this.

This was the culmination of our training at the PMA, and the elevation for a more endearing role at a higher level, as the Officers and future Commanders of this Army. Destiny perhaps did not permit us to achieve it to the degree of that we had hoped, but we did our best. The new Battalion Senior Under-Officer then requested the Prime Minister for the permission to march off the rest of the Battalion. With Quaid-e- Azam's Banner at the fore, the Battalion, in the columns of three's, marched past the Prime Minister, who took the salute. After the parade, Mr and Mrs Liaquat Ali Khan and the other distinguished guests were invited to lunch in the Officers Mess, with a select band in attendance. The guests of the cadets had their lunch in the cadet messes.

I often ask myself whether those promises were ever truly fulfilled. The term Gentleman Cadet implied a very high standard of integrity and loyalty to the oath taken to defend the Constitution and the country. Was this standard met? The answer is more nuanced than a simple yes or no. The standards of training were very high, and professionally we were groomed well, but the system of grading was such that it systematically built in a marked tendency to show off. We were behaving not as individuals but as puppets who acted only to impress the instructors and get good grades. It became a primary concern for some of us. This was not only unnatural, but it also encouraged a spirit of selfishness. Where lays the fault? Is it in training imparted?

Eventually, it mattered little as for the rest of the service the Army had its own system of evaluating the performance of the officers. But, unfortunately, that too has its flaws in that it did not enable outspoken professional soldiers to rise to higher positions.

Instead, personal loyalty to superiors and a meek mind was appreciated. Fearlessness and boldness are the qualities that should be required of officers; this is their ultimate test in war. Someone rightly pointed out that we want our officers to behave like mice in the peacetime, and then we want them to roar like a lion in combat, which seems like an oxymoron. These officers need to be shown more encouragement to take the initiative, be more imaginative and to behave and act as soldiers who are dedicated to serving this Army and Country. Repeatedly, the key figures in command in the Army, have betrayed their oaths. The character that they have shown is not worthy of the ranks they have held.

## CHAPTER 4

## LIFE AS A COMMISSIONED OFFICER

I received my commission in the Arm of Artillery. From PMA we went to Quetta, where we spent a few months at the Infantry School. There we completed our weapons and Junior Officers Leadership Courses. Quetta was a small but a hospitable place. Rab Nawaz, who was in PMA with us, had now moved there and had become a contractor with Military Engineering Service (MES). He was doing well, and we regularly enjoyed his hospitality. He had offered us an open house and enthusiastically welcomed us. The stay at Quetta was busy; days were spent on our hectic training schedule while the evenings had their share of social life. We visited the Staff College, Chilton Hotel, Hanna Lake, and the other places of interest regularly. There was a saying in Quetta that whosoever comes there will visit it several times. Some version said three times, yet and another would suggest five times and some hints were made of seven visits even. I had the opportunity of serving there three times.

From Quetta, we moved on to Nowshera, where we attended the Young Officer's Artillery Course. This was a very professional course, and it laid down real practical and technical knowledge in all aspects of handling the Artillery. From the gun drill to the basic detachment of a gun, all the technical work involved in the laying down the fire of the guns at their targets, the deployment and organisation of gun positions, all were covered. It was fascinating and absorbing. The mention of the gun drill reminds me of a funny incident that happened during the course. A field gun had a detachment of 6 people. Each number had an assigned role and a particular gun position. As a part of the gun drill, each of us was assigned a number, and on the orders of take post, we were to rush and assume our specific positions at the gun. To make us familiar with the place and the duty of all the numbers of the gun detachment, these were rotated amongst us regularly. Every day, we were given a new number for the gun position. On the orders of take post, the gun detachment of 6 of us was required to rush with great alacrity and speed to our respective position. We had a course of 12 Officers and would make two gun detachments. Second Lieutenant (Later Major General) N.K.Babar and Second Lieutenant (Later Lieutenant General) Jehan Dad Khan would never remember the position that each number had to occupy. On the orders to take post, they would shoot off towards the gun at full speed, but never about which position to take. They would keep circling around the gun till all the positions had been occupied! Then, whichever position was empty, they would jump to and occupy frantically. The instructors would commend them for their show of brazen zeal, but would jokingly remind them they still had not learned the positions that the different numbers must take at the gun.

The life at Nowshera was quiet. As a change from the regular meals at the mess, visits to the restaurant at the Nowshera Railway Station were quite frequent. Outings to Peshawar were also fairly regular since Muhammad Zafar Khan and Muhammad Hassan Durrani had their families living there.

Risalpur, besides being the home of the PAF Academy, was also the station of the 100 Independent Armoured Brigade. Babar's uncle, Lieutenant Colonel Ihsan Ullah Khan Babar, was commanding 13 Lancers so we would cycle over there to visit him. He used to visit the mess almost every day. There were other officers in the Mess too. Lieutenant Colonel (Later Lieutenant General) Gul Hassan, who was a close friend of Lieutenant Colonel Babar, was also always there. He was Commanding 5 Horse (Probyns). The atmosphere in the Mess was tranquil, and these senior officers would make everyone else feel remarkably at ease. Also, we had graduated from Ist PMA Course, which let us enjoy our own special recognition from them. Their views showed professionalism, self-confidence, and showed a marked maturity well beyond their years. It was very reassuring to see that we had some highly professional and dedicated officers in the middle seniority range. We became quite close with Lieutenant Colonel Gul Hassan and Lieutenant Colonel Babar, and we maintained these bonds with them for the rest of their lives. In fact, the progress of time made the bonds we had forged stronger. Lieutenant Colonel Gul Hassan stood as an outstanding officer, one who was always respected and admired. He was a professional soldier and a patriot. His chief strength was that he had no inhibitions, would meet everyone freely, listen to their views patiently, but yet keep his strong personal convictions.

Towards the end of 1950, we completed our training at Nowshera. We were asked for the choice of posting to the various Artillery units. During the course 8 Medium and 12 Medium Regiments were being preferred by most of us. These were at Peshawar. It was an elegant cantonment, thus the attraction, and in addition, these were the only Medium Regiments in the Artillery. The man who was strongly suggesting the choice of these units was Zafar. He belonged to Peshawar, and thus it had a much-added attraction for him. I put in my choice for 12 Medium.1Mountan Regiment was camping at the Artillery Ranges, Nowshera for their annual firing. They played a friendly Hockey match with the Artillery School team.

Zafar was playing for the school team. He was an excellent player, and it immediately caught the eye of Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier) Muzaffar the Commanding Officer (CO) of the unit. He immediately picked on him and asked his Adjutant, Captain (later Brigadier) Yousaf to remind him to talk to GHQ to arrange for his posting to 1 Mountain Regiment. Zafar had given his choice for 12 Medium. A few days later our assignments to different units were received from GHQ. Zafar and Jehan Dad were posted to 1 Mountain Regiment. Since the unit was camping at Nowshera, they were advised to proceed straight to the ranges. This came as a shock to Zafar; he had been hoping for a posting to Peshawar. On receiving the news, he locked himself in his room. Some of us were speculating that perhaps he was crying inside. Zafar was by far the most disappointed of us all. Jehan Dad did not mind, and the rest seemed all happy and satisfied at our postings. I was posted to 12 Medium Regiment.

It was towards the early part of 1951 that I joined the unit at Peshawar. Arrival in the unit felt like coming home. Though the officers in the Artillery had no permanent affiliations to any one unit, the first posting to a Regiment had its own excitement, sense of belonging and is always remembered, for good reasons or for bad. Luckily for me, this was most memorable for good reasons, and though my stay in the unit was not very long, I had very fond memories of it. Our CO was Lieutenant Colonel (Later General), Tikka Khan. Though he was a Company Commander at PMA, I was not in his Company and did not know him too well, but regardless he was still a familiar face and had a stellar reputation. Under his guidance and command, we felt very confident in starting our career. Captain (Later Brigadier) Ghulam Yazdani, whom we had known from our PMA days, was our Adjutant. The other officers made this an excellent team. The guns had been issued, but the transporters, which were Matador Trucks, had not yet arrived. Soon after my joining, we heard the news that the vehicles had arrived at Karachi and that Captain Wajid Ali Khan had been detailed to collect those on a special train. This was all routine. But soon we heard some astonishing details about this assignment. Captain Wajid told us that on hearing these orders, he had sought an appointment with the CO. As he was called in, he addressed some of his personal problems to him. He told the CO that since it was a special train, and he was carrying the complement of Armed Guards from the unit, he wanted his permission to stop this train on its way back to Peshawar. The CO was naturally very surprised at this request but asked Wajid for his reason behind this strange request. Wajid while giving these details to us said he felt a little encouraged and relieved at the somewhat sympathetic response from the CO. He went on to explain that there was a small village near Hyderabad, and Wajid wanted permission from the CO to stop the train near this village. It was Hur territory. Wajid wanted to surround this village with the unit guards and help in the evacuation of a girl from this village. This request just exacerbated the CO, and he became furious with Wajid. He told him, “You want me to help you in abducting a girl? How dare you ask my permission and approval for planning and doing this?” Wajid had to brace himself up. In a composed and pleading voice explained, Wajid said, “Sir, the girl is a relative of mine. She wants to marry me. Since she is from the Hur family, the brothers were opposed to this marriage.” The CO considered it sympathetically and eventually gave his permission. We were amazed to learn about that. Wajid appeared more in a state of shock and disbelief on having had the approval of his strange request. We still did not understand the full implications of this. When Wajid arrived back at Peshawar with the special train, carrying the Matadors, only then did we understand the sensitivity and gravity of the matter. He explained that on arrival near this village he stopped the train and surrounded the village with the Armed Guards that he had with him. Luckily, the brothers of the girl had not been home. It seemed that some elderly ladies of the family had given their approval for the marriage and so were cooperative. The girl was brought aboard the special train and arrived at Peshawar Railway Station. Luckily there was no firing and no other untoward incident. The CO took the girl to his house and kept her there. The Nikah was performed under the blessings of the CO. At this stage, the brothers of Wajid’s wife started sending very threatening messages, threatening to kill the newlyweds. The CO allotted married accommodation to Wajid and provided 24 hours Armed Guards at his house. They lived happily, but always under threat. Wajid and I joined Air OP in 1951. He, unfortunately, died in an accident. Major (Later Brigadier) Jabbar our CO at No. 1 Air OP Flight brought about reconciliation within the family, and Mrs Wajid along with her children moved back and continued to live with her brothers. In hindsight, one could not help but admire the caliber of our CO. He knew the risks involved, but since he was convinced that the story was true and the officer’s interest had to be secured, he gave his approval for this action. It was an unlawful decision, but for him, the main thing was the welfare of both the officer and his would be wife. So he took the risk. Later we have seen some of our senior officers, shamelessly flouting all norms of legal and moral authority for their own personal interests, gains and benefits and not caring for the welfare of the officers and men under them.

With the arrival of the Matadors on the special train, the unit embarked on its operational training in real earnest. It worked efficiently.

The first actual test came when the unit was taken to Nowshera Ranges to gauge our operational performance. Brigadier Morley, who was the Director of Artillery, was at the Ranges to test the battle worthiness of the unit. The unit was put through its drills of deployments, and the climax was the live firing at the Artillery Range. The overall performance was excellent; in particular, the results of the engagement of different targets were of textbook standard. Brigadier Morley congratulated all the officers and other ranks present at the observation point. The CO appeared very excited and gave us all a graphic account of the excellent firing results of all the shoots that had been undertaken. The Director of Artillery had declared the unit entirely fit for war. It was a rewarding experience for all of us. We returned to Peshawar fully baptised in our battlefield inoculation.

The life in Peshawar was fascinating both professionally and socially. Life at the mess was very meaningful. Lieutenant Colonel Tikka Khan had seen actual service in World War-II with an Artillery unit. The theatre of war was the campaign in North Africa. The Panzer Divisions of the Rommel's Army had broken through the defences of the Allied forces at El-Alamein and other strategic locations in the desert. Our CO used to give the most realistic firsthand accounts of the battles fought there. It was most informative, illuminating and satisfying listening to those details. We were fortunate in that we had a senior officer who had personally experienced this battle. We felt as if we were partaking in those actions. The climax was the charge that the Panzer formations made. Having overrun the positions of the infantry and the armoured formations of the Allied troops, the enemy tanks came charging at the gun positions held by the field regiment in which Captain Tikka Khan was serving at that time. In vivid detail, he would describe that at the news of the approaching enemy tanks, the guns prepared themselves for direct firing to meet with this tank threat. The gun positions had been well prepared and dug in well, which enabled them to take the tanks on effectively. In this battle, the enemy tanks suffered heavy casualties. The attack was repulsed, and the tanks withdrew, having failed, the enemy armour had to regroup. They decided to manoeuvre around the gun position. The tanks now approached the position from behind. Unfortunately, the gun position had not been dug for 360-degree traverse. The gun barrels could not be turned in the direction from which the tanks were now approaching. The position was thus overrun. Fighting against all these odds, Captain Tikka Khan, was captured and they were all taken to POW camps in Italy. Major (Later) General M.Yahya Khan,Captain (Later Lieutenant General) Sahibzada Yaqub and many others were also there in those camps. He then would give us details as to how they made attempts to escape through tunnel they made; some succeeded, but Captain Tikka Khan was not one of those lucky ones. Major (Later General) Yahya Khan was amongst those who managed to escape. These were all fascinating stories and kept us grossly absorbed. Some of our other colleagues were not so lucky. Their senior officers had no such war experiences. Maybe they were not even in the area of the war and even if they were, they were either in the Supply Corps or any other outfits which were safely away from the drums of the battle and had never even seen a shot fired in anger. These were the contrasting backgrounds of our senior officers. Those who were battle worthy and otherwise too professionally competent, had their demeanour. They were composed, confident and would freely mix with Junior Officers. They would discuss all their experiences freely. To the contrary, those who had no such experiences or background, behaved radically different. They remained aloof lest they are found out, keeping themselves at a distance. They had learnt and developed the art of command through creating fear in the minds of the subordinates.

In Peshawar, we had a small group of friends which met regularly. The Peshawar Club was our favourite haunt. Yazdani, Abu Zafar Shamim, Murtaza Jan all from the IMA/PMAcourse, and S.M.Akhtar and I from the first PMA Long Course, were the regular occupiers of the Artillery mess. We were serving in different units and would share our experiences in the evenings. There were many amusing tales. Abu Zafar Shamim (nicknamed Buddy Shamim) and Murtaza Jan had hired a tutor to teach them Pashto. He would regularly come every day on time, but Shamim and Murtaza would find very odd ways to dodge him. This cat-and-mouse game went on for some time. The tutor was perplexed by this; he was regularly paid, but these two had attended no class. One day he could corner them, and when he asked them the reason for this strange behaviour, they told him they only did so to get a kick out of it!

Having become fully operational, the unit was assigned the task of joining the Division on an exercise with troops. This was being specially undertaken to familiarise the troops, with the actual likely area of their operations in and around Landi Kotal. It was still winter. On arrival there, we were indicated the positions for our deployment. We carried out the necessary recce. The area was mountainous, and so was hard to locate and deploy the Medium Guns in that terrain. After a detailed recce, the 2IC finalised the gun positions and we prepared and occupied those. At that time each battery had two troops. There were four guns in each troop. The regiment had a complement of 24 guns. Second Lieutenant

(Later Brigadier) Abdul Hamid, known as Hamidi, was the other troop commander. After a full day's work, I was just beginning to relax. It was evening time, and the sun was to set soon, when I got a message from our Adjutant, Captain Yazdani, informing me that the Director of Artillery, Brigadier Morley, would visit the positions shortly. I quickly cleaned myself up to give a good impression. He arrived soon, accompanied by our CO, who introduced me to him. He gave me a decent look. I was getting an impression that my tidiness was having an adverse impact on him. I was wearing a Jungle hat, Ray-Ban sunglasses, and dressed in a decent Jersey. The troops were wearing helmets, F.S.M.O. Kits on their jersey, and had on Combat Boots. This was in contrast to the dress that the troops were wearing. I showed him the different slopes on which we had moved the guns and finally located and deployed them. In an attempt to impress him, I was emphasizing as to how we had got clear lines of fire for the guns in this difficult terrain. There was no dead ground in the range of the guns. He kept listening but hardly put any questions. As he was leaving, it was drizzling. The sunset would approach soon, and I was preparing myself for a good night's sleep. I sat in the command post mindless of what impressions I had created on the mind of Director of Artillery.

I was soon surprised by the call from the Adjutant to go and recce the alternative positions. In coordination with the other troop commander Hamidi, we drove to the area of the alternative position. On the way, I bemoaned how nobody in their sane mind would ask us to occupy these alternate positions and in the rain. To further add to my complacency, I was telling him that the guns are deployed on sloping grounds, and no one could tell us to move from these slopes in the pitch black darkness, to another area with equally challenging terrain. Hamidi felt the same way. So we firmly came to the conclusions that the odds are all stacked up against any orders to occupy the alternative positions. We hurriedly took a drive in our alternative positions, which in our minds we had declared that we were not likely to occupy. We paid scant attentions to any details.

I had hardly reached my command post when I got the orders to occupy the alternative positions. I was shocked, and I immediately called Hamidi and told him about this strange order. He expressed his ignorance as he had received none such orders. I frantically called Yazdani, our Adjutant, nicknamed Danny. I asked him "Danny I hope you are not joking, you can't be serious about these orders!"

"No, I am serious. This order is for your troop only. This has been given by Brigadier Morley personally." Pat came the reply. This put me in a state of paralysis, both mental and physical. As I was recovering, it was gradually dawning on me; the subtle ways of a British officer to gauge the juniors, assess them and then put them to test. My first reaction was that I cannot let my unit down. Equally foreboding was the idea that I could not destroy the faith that our CO had placed in us. I was striving to have a resolve to come equally to the task. It was in this state of mind that I proceeded with this daunting task. It was now raining, but the entire night I kept working, picking individual gun positions marking the routes, doing the sign posting and lighting and making all plans and arrangements to occupy the alternate gun positions. Having done that, I was now seized with the most arduous task: shifting the weapons. Each gun was pulled out from the slopes. They were guided one by one to the new locations. It was the test of ingenuity. I heaved a sigh of relief when this was achieved with no incident. After that, we kept digging, preparing the gun positions and the command post. Finally, we lowered the guns in their positions, and by first light the next day, the guns had been fully deployed, camouflaged and ready to fire. We had worked the whole night; each one of us was covered in mud, our faces and clothes both alike.

At the strike of dawn, I suddenly saw Brigadier Morley, accompanied by our CO Lieutenant Colonel Tikka Khan, approaching the gun positions. Coming towards me, Brigadier Morley had a very inquisitive look on his face. I was completely covered in mud from face to my shoes and seeing this put a smile on his face. “It looks much better.”he said. I told him that the gun position is fully ready. This time he had all the questions to ask. Happily, I had the right answers to all his queries too. Having fully satisfied himself, he told me I should complement all my men for a job well done. I felt very relieved and satisfied. It was more so because the unit had earned an excellent label. Equally important was the fact that our Commanding Officer, under whose umbrella we had jelled into a commendable team, himself was presently witnessing this. After seeing off the Director, Lieutenant Colonel Tikka Khan came back to our gun position and admiringly described the words of praise that the Director of Artillery had expressed to him about performing 12 Medium Regiment. He had earlier witnessed the great firing of the Regiment at the Ranges. Now he had seen it take part in the exercise with troops. He was most impressed and had openly recognised it. He was declaring 12 Medium Regiment as the best amongst all the Artillery units. It was a matter of great pride and elation for all of us.

Artillery was experiencing a relatively rapid expansion. More and more units were being raised and to overcome the problem of shortage of the officers, a fair number of inductions from other services had taken place. Mostly senior Captains and Major level officers had been inducted, most of which came from Army Supply Corps and Ordnance. Their experience and background were in these fields. The discussions and expositions of these officers were centered on that. We would hear about how the supply train got held up, or there was a sudden shortage of Ammo and other essential items in particular sectors and so on and so forth. These were not very inspiring accounts. We would laugh it away. But we always felt reservations about these officers. The label of "Sheikhs" had been coined for them. They served their purpose, but never felt confident or at ease in the units, trying to bullshit their way through. They would keep their distance rather than mix freely. In some units, which were not blessed with Commanding officers of good stature and caliber, they would make life difficult for the Junior Officers. When some of our colleagues, serving in other units, met us and shared their experiences, we considered ourselves lucky. The Commanding officer was the key man; he played the most pivotal role in the building up of the unit, and this aspect was being neglected from the very beginning. For this Kingpin role, the best of the officers should be attracted and kept in command for longer tenures of duty. They would gain the much-needed leadership experience, and the units would be better trained and groomed. This will usher both well trained and better officers, and more battle worthy units. The trend, unfortunately, had been the other way around. Officers were spending much less time with troops and in command, and mostly sought the cushy comforts of holding staff appointments.

The busy life of the unit was continuing. Playing games with the soldiers was being given special emphasis. Hockey was a standard game, one which I played frequently. Hamidi was an international player. This helped in building the unit hockey team. I also got adjusted in it. At the Artillery reunion at Campbellpur (Later Attock), our unit won the Inter Unit Hockey Championship. At the time of the photograph of the team with the CO, I was emphatically telling Hamidi that he should stand behind me so that later when I would show the picture to other people, I could say that when I played hockey, I had an international player standing behind me, and hence show off. Hamidi complied graciously. It was in a friendly spirit. The Regiment was excelling in professional performance and also in sports.

## CHAPTER 5

## INTERLUDE WITH THE POLITICIANS AND RETURN TO UNIT

One day I was called by the CO. He told me to report to Major S.G. Mehdi (our Company Commander in PMA), who had just arrived in Peshawar, as Brigade Major in the Infantry Brigade. As I was shown into his office, he was very pleased to see me. He told me that the PM had arrived in Peshawar for a brief stay, and since his temporarily assigned ADC was sick, I should immediately report to the Governor House to take over his duties temporarily. I reported to the Principal Secretary to the PM, Nawabzada Siddique Ali Khan. After a brief introduction, he informed me that the PM would shortly leave for the Provincial Assembly building and that I would accompany them. Soon Mr Liaquat Ali Khan showed up. I was presented to him, and with a gracious smile, he shook hands with me. He met me very affectionately.

We got into the car and left for the venue. On the way, I learned that the occasion was the election of the President of the Pakistan Muslim League NWFP. We reached the Assembly building. Just outside was a considerable number of people and some slogans were being raised. As we got in, we were met by Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, who was the Chief Minister of NWFP. He took us to the rostrum where we got seated. Someone from amongst the crowd got up and started complaining to the PM. I learned later he was Mr Ibrahim Khan Jhagra. He was also a contestant for the office of the President PML NWFP. This position was held by Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan, and he was now standing for reelection. The complaint was that Khan Qayyum had blocked the entrance for many of the supporters of Mr Jhagra. They were the ones who were raising slogans outside the Assembly. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan asked Nawabzada Siddique Ali Khan to go outside and sort out the problem. Those who were members of the Pakistan Muslim League could come in. The process of elections started. Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan won the elections and kept his post as President Pakistan Muslim League, NWFP, for the second term. When we were returning, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan expressed his satisfaction at the outcome of the results. He said that he wanted Khan Qayyum to win, but was desirous that there should be a sizeable opposition too. Lest he became a dictator; he did not then have the forewarning that this country was to have the misfortune of a chain of Military Dictators!

At the Government House, I met with Mr I.I. Chundrigar, who was the Governor of NWFP. At the dinner, GOC Major General Majid was also present besides the many other guests. He saw my one pip of the Second Lieutenant at my shoulders and asked me to put on the Captain's rank. Overnight I arranged it and next morning I was sitting with this rank at the breakfast table. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, was very prompt[1] and was the first to notice it. He asked me, "Young man don't I see a change on your shoulders." I replied in the affirmative. He congratulated me and further asked if it had any remuneration. My answer was in the negative. He had a laugh and sympathised with me. The PM's stay was not very long, but I liked the opportunity of meeting the people at that level. It was a very homely atmosphere. There were no tensions of any formalities or protocol. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan would narrate many an events and experiences, with explicit details. He was very friendly and possessed a marked sense of humour. His stay was too short for me to make any detailed assessment. He was carrying his office with dignity and poise. He showed a very marked affiliation for the Muslim University, Aligarh. At a function hosted by its old boy's Association, he chimed praise for it. We, a small group of ex- students of Government College, Lahore, by a coincident, sat together at a table. Occasionally, on his eulogising of the MAO University of Aligarh, we raised slogans in praise of Government College Lahore. He laughed at it and did not seem to mind.

One day, as we were driving out for a function, he told me that only once had he seen the Quaid-e-Azam worried and nervous. He narrated the details. He mentioned that Sir Stafford Cripps had arrived in India with a specific plan for giving Independence to India. This was known as the Cripps Plan. He told me that Cripps had met with Mr Jinnah and had discussed this idea. Mr Liaquat Ali Khan narrated that when he reached Quaid's House, he saw him very nervously pacing up and down the verandah, and upon seeing this Liaquat Ali asked whether something was worrying him, to which Jinnah replied in the affirmative. He gave the details of the meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps and the plan. The Quaid explained that he had finally accepted this plan, but also that he did not like it since there were many hazards and pitfalls in this for the Muslims. He had accepted these terms in only one hope; when Gandhi and Nehru were to meet Stafford Cripps later and were to realize that Mr Jinnah had agreed with this plan, they would reject it. They will think that there was some catch in this. Quaid explained that if Gandhi and Nehru were to accept it, this would be disastrous for the Muslims.

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[1] From the rank of Second Lieutenant I put on the Captain's rank, which was promptly noticed by the PM.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan revealed that this nervousness remained till the evening. Once the Quaid learned that Gandhi and Nehru had rejected this plan, he felt very relieved.

The PM and his entourage left for Karachi. I was about to leave for my unit when I was called in by Mr Chundrigar. He told me to stay on as his ADC. He said he had already spoken to the GOC, and he had agreed. He hardly left any choice to me.

In the evening I went to the unit as they were holding the annual sports day. The wife of the G.O.C. was the Chief Guest. There was no event that I could take part in. The easier role of a commentator came to my lot. After the games, I met the CO and sought his advice and guidance as to what should I do in the light of Mr Chundrigar's desire for me to take over as his ADC. The CO gave his approval. I was pleading with him I had hardly spent a few months in the unit, but he brushed this away, saying that I could have time to serve in the unit again, so it did not matter. We had become a very close-knit family, and it was always considered very prudent for all of us to speak our mind to our CO and seek his advice. I had to agree.

The life at the Governor's House was an easy routine. As Governor, Mr Chundrigar was essentially the head of Federally Administrated Tribal Area (FATA). He was dealing with all the Political Agents directly, and through them, he was in touch with the various Tribal Maliks. Mr Fazal-ur-Rahman was his Secretary. All the other affairs of the Provincial Government were handled by the Chief Minister.

Soon after my taking over as ADC, we visited Karachi, where we stayed at the Governor General House. Khawaja Nazim-ud-din was the Governor General. At a reception in the evening, I had a first close look at the important policy and decision makers in the country. General Ayub Khan had taken over as the first Pakistani Commander-in-Chief of the Army. What struck me the most was, how everyone was trying to hover around General Ayub. He was standing tall and had an impressive personality. What looked really strange was how everyone was cajoling up to him! Words like, "The fate of the country is in your hands were being addressed to him".I could not help but wonder why these gestures would not get to his head.

In the summer the Frontier Government moved to Nathiagali. The Governor's House had a lovely view; the lawns were kept very well maintained, and the gardens had flower beds laid. One of the early visitor's was the Governor General, Khawaja Nazim-ud-Din. He was an excellent conversationalist, and being a simple man would make everyone feel at ease and create a very congenial atmosphere. He opened up his conversation with me by telling a joke about the ADC to Lord Linlithgow, who was once the Viceroy in India. He mentioned that Lady Linlithgow was a very hard taskmaster. She was a stickler for every detail, and the staff of the Viceroy's House was hard put to adjust to her demanding ways. The ADC of the Viceroy had also felt the intense pressure of her means of handling the staff. He narrated that the ADC one day went up to the Viceroy and requested that he should be sent back to his Regiment. With a great laughter he described that the Viceroy told his ADC, "Young man, you are lucky you have a Regiment to go to. I have none."This joke was shared by the small group at the breakfast table, and the discussions continued in that light- hearted vein. Mr Ikram Ullah Khan was the Foreign Secretary. He came with his daughters and spent nearly a month as the guest of the Governor. His wife, Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah, stayed back at Karachi. She was a member of the Constituent Assembly and was also a busy social worker. Nathiagali was a small place, and the social activities were rather limited. Mr Chundrigar was usually busy with his official work in which he was mostly engaged in meeting all the Secretaries and other Government Officials. All this routine was being handled by his Secretary Mr Fazal- ur-Rehman. He was a PCS Officer. A group of these PCS Officers from NWFP had been recently promoted to the CSP group. Ghulam Ishaq Khan was also one of those. I first met him when these newly promoted CSP Officers first came to meet the Governor. Since I was not involved in these official meetings; I had plenty of free time. Mr Ikram Ullah and I had the entire day practically to ourselves. We discussed, at length, different topics. He was a Bengali Officer, and his wife was a very close relation of Mr H.S. Suharawardy. He would narrate how his wife was distrusting Mr Suhrawardy's loyalty to Pakistan. But I could not share this view as I had no idea. Mr Ikram Ullah was a brilliant officer. He was an excellent example of the class of ICS Officers of that time.

He told me that there were 86 senior ICS and Indian Finance Service officers who had opted for Pakistan. Between them, they were running the affairs of the country. He had transferred to the Foreign Service. He and I had many animated discussions. We covered a lot of the subjects, including Foreign Policy.

He gave a few books to me to read, which gave a wonderful insight of how to handle diplomacy. The role and the functions of a diplomat were also covered at length. He became very intimate with me and considered me as a part of his family. He very affectionately suggested to me I should join Foreign Service; he would take me in immediately. I was very touched by his sincerity and pondered over it, but told him that joining the Army was a passion, and I could not let that go. He appreciated my straightforward answer. In the evening there was not much social activity. Mr Chundrigar was an excellent bridge player, and he pursued this interest. Mr Manzur Qadir was also staying at Nathiagali, and he too was an outstanding bridge player. The problem was to make a foursome. Mr Ikram Ullah and I had to be brought in out of compulsion to have a regular game of bridge in the evening. We were just novices, but the other talented players had to tolerate us. We proved good company and learned fairly quickly. Mr Chundrigar and Mr Manzur Qadir showed immense patience with us. They lived with our bloomers, but with great pains and with implicit details, they would analyse every hand played. Their counselling and advice were so good that we soon blended into a formidable foursome and enjoyed our daily games of bridge.

One day Mr Ikram Ullah expressed his wish to travel to Murree with his family. He wanted me to convey his desire to the Governor of Punjab for this planned visit and also asked me to get the permission to take the Governor House, NWFP car to travel to the Mall, Murree. I gave this message to Captain Shakir Ullah Durrani (who later became Governor State Bank of Pakistan and Chairman PIA), ADC to the Governor of Punjab. I was rather shocked at the reply. H.E. the Governor of Punjab, Mr Abdur Rab Nishtar, while welcoming the visit of Mr Ikram Ullah and his family to Murree, had refused the permission of the use of a car on the Mall. I was told that the Rules of the Punjab Government restrict the use of a car in Murree to only seven dignitaries. Since the Foreign Secretary does not come on that list, he could not be allowed this privilege. I was particularly surprised at this because I had specially told Durrani that Mr Ikram Ullah had knee problems and could not go on long walks. On hearing this refusal, Mr Ikram Ullah got very perturbed and asked me to convey a personal message to Mr Abdur Rab Nishtar. He dictated this to me, and I read it out to Captain Durrani. It went something like this, “ Thank you for your message. You have refused me the permission for the use of a car of Governor House, NWFP on the Mall, Murree. You have done this by the rules of the Government of Punjab. If you recall, you had requested help for the admission of your son Jamil Nishtar to Cambridge University. The Rules of the University did not allow this. I had to make use of my personal contacts with the members of the faculty and the administration of Cambridge University to circumvent these Rules. I am amazed that you are now applying the Rules of the Government to refuse me." Soon after that, I conveyed this message to Captain Durrani. He called me back almost immediately and informed me that the Governor of Punjab had given permission for Mr Ikram Ullah Khan to bring his car to the Mall. Mr Ikram Ullah declined this offer, and he had a message conveyed back, saying that he does not wish to visit Murree. I was overwhelmed by the caliber of Mr Ikram Ullah. As a Federal Secretary, he could not take any nonsense from any quarter, be it even a Governor. He was an extremely upright officer, who had integrity, stood on principles and was not prepared to sacrifice his dignity at any cost. These senior officers of that time were a distinct class by themselves. They had tremendous strength and courage of conviction. And between the handfuls of them they were running this Country in its infancy and that too admirably. How this changed over the time, one may like to Ponder!

After spending a month's holidays at Nathiagali, Mr Ikram Ullah Khan left for Karachi. He told me he would remain in touch with me and that whenever I come to Karachi, I must meet with him. On the first visit that we made, he came to see Mr Chundrigar and requested him to allow some time to me, as he was keen to invite me to his house. This was immediately agreed upon, and he took me to his house. He introduced me to his wife. She had a gracious personality; her remarkable intellect and her forthright manner of speaking candidly and with conviction were very striking. In the few years of the existence of Pakistan, she had clearly discerned the decadence of values and the moral and ethical turpitude that was setting in the society. The wrath of the anger of Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah was directed on the newly emerging elite in the country. She narrated her remarks she had made in the Constituent Assembly. She had stated that the sign of prosperity in Pakistan was a new big car and a second wife. Our standards and values had clearly dropped.

When we made another visit to Karachi later, I had the privilege of meeting Mr Ikram Ullah Khan and his family again. It was enjoyable as the atmosphere was very homely and congenial. Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah was exquisite in her exposition. She told me that H.S Suhrawardy was her first cousin and that she knew his mind perfectly. She further said, "He is not loyal to Pakistan. He tried to have a united Bengal, but when he failed in that effort, he very reluctantly reconciled to the idea of Pakistan." I had heard this earlier from Mr Ikram Ullah Khan, but now, coming straight from her, it had a different impact and meaning.

The reception at the Governor General's House was literally a repeat of the previous one. Everyone was trying to gather around General Ayub Khan. I had a look at the people in the corridors of power. The thing that was striking was that there was a lack of any towering political leadership. I was getting the impression that our political leadership is composed of mediocre people. There was some buzz of confidence around. There were no rumors of corruption. The people at the helm of the affairs had integrity.

While we were still at Nathiagali, the tensions between India and Pakistan mounted. The Indians had concentrated their troops on our borders. The PM, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, had responded with the demonstration of his fist, showing his firm resolve to stand up to the Indian Challenge. This resulted in the concentration of our own troops on the border as well.

Soon after this, I got a call from Director of Artillery, GHQ Rawalpindi. I was surprised that Brigadier Morley had remembered me. He had visited our unit twice. It was reassuring to me he was carrying a positive impression of me. Not only that, he had seemed to follow my career in the Army. He knew that I was currently attached as ADC to the Governor of NWFP. He was giving me a rather personal message. It had the wisdom of his long experience in the Army. He told me, "Young man, your place is with your Regiment. It has moved to the concentration area, and you must join it." I readily agreed with this thought and promised him I would be shortly rejoining the unit. I mentioned this to Mr Chundrigar. He did not think that one officer would make much difference to our operational preparedness. I told him it was not simply the question of just one officer. In fact, it was the spirit of the Army. I felt that it was the bounden duty of everyone in the service of the Armed Forces, to rise to the call in defence of the country. He still was not convinced. He told me that next day Major General Haji Iftikhar GOC. Peshawar was coming for lunch and that he would further discuss this with him. On arrival of the GOC to Nathiagali, we discussed this subject with him. He thought if I wanted to stay on, he would approve it. When he learned that I wanted to join my regiment, he requested Mr Chundrigar that I should be relieved. It was rather reluctantly that Mr Chundrigar allowed me to leave. I had only spent a few months with him, but he had developed a certain liking for me. I thanked him for that and in the afternoon drove with the GOC to Rawalpindi to be with my unit.

The next day I reported to my Regiment, which was located near Sambrial, on the road to Sialkot. The CO Lieutenant Colonel Tikka Khan and the other officers were very pleased to see me. 12 Medium had been knit into a close family, and we all felt the strong bonds of affinity. I was appointed the Adjutant of the unit. The real job of being a soldier had just started. It was still summer, and the scorching heat of Sialkot was telling. In this respect, I was missing the comfort of Nathiagali. The CO used to be away the whole day, doing the reconnaissance and the planning of the likely operational tasks. Pakistan Artillery had only two medium regiments at that time, and so its role was significant. The CO would return in the evening. After the dinner, he would see the mail and take appropriate decisions and give instructions to me in this respect. This would go on till late at night, and it was invariably around 1 AM or 2 AM that we would go to sleep. I could not get up early in the morning for our daily physical training exercises. The Second in Command (2 I/C) Major Nawaz was getting annoyed over this and had this conveyed to me. I mentioned this to CO. He told me to ignore this and that he would personally discuss this with the 2 I/C. Major Nawaz was one of the Sheikhs in the Artillery and a petty thief too. He was pinching small monies from the unit Canteen. I had told the CO about it, who had warned him about it subsequently. In the unit, he was a misfit. This routine went on. One evening, I saw a letter from GHQ Artillery Directorate asking for a report on Major Nawaz, as his name was being considered for promotion to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. After dinner, I put up the mail to the CO, who read this letter. He asked me my opinion on this, but I chose to remain quiet. Lieutenant Colonel Tikka Khan eventually opted to overlook his shortcomings and recommended him for promotion. He also knew that he too was due for a promotion and on his transfer; Major Nawaz was likely to take over the unit. Sensing that this would possibly be a problem for me, he asked me where I would like to be posted. I had hardly spent one year in the unit, including my stay as ADC. I really did not know what to say. He offered me a chance to enroll in the Gunnery Staff Course or to join Air OP The flying career in Air OP offered a very exciting possibility and so I opted for that. At that time I had no particular passion for this.

Captain Wajid Ali, who was earlier in 12 Medium, also joined me for this course. There was only one flight, No 1 Air OP Flight RPAF. It was the smallest independent unit in RPAF and since we were part of Royal Pakistan Air Force (RPAF), we carried that with the title of the Flight. There was a Flight Commander, Major (Later Brigadier) G. Jabbar and four pilots. We had five or six Auster V and Auster VI Aircraft. It was a PAF unit and based at PAF Chaklala Air Base. There was a small hanger with attached offices; now the current PIA Terminal, in which we were housed. The No. 1 Air OP Flight RPAF was a little family.

We got adjusted quickly in this homely atmosphere. The initial training was done at the University Air Squadron. This was a small outfit which PAF was using to attract pilots directly from the Colleges. The instructor was an old veteran retired RAF Officer, Squadron Leader (Retd), Ray, who had earlier instructed some famous World War- II RAF pilots. The aircraft we flew were called Tiger Moths. They were easy to handle and also aerobatic, which made flying fun. We enjoyed our training and after qualifying joined the Air OP Flight. Our instructor was Captain (Later Brigadier) M. Saleem Ullah. Here we trained on Auster V & Auster VI Aircraft. The focus was on strip landing and the direction of Artillery Fire as Air OP. The Air OP was to operate with the field formations. This needed operations from Advanced Landing Grounds (ALG). These were small strips of the length of 250 yards, and we were initiated to the drills for the recce and occupations of such ALG's. This was quite interesting. The direction of the Artillery fire, as Air OP, was a problematic exercise. When on the ranges, we were to take shoots with the Artillery units? Whenever we arrived at the ground observation post (OP), from where all the shoots were undertaken, we found the atmosphere usually rather hostile. We were outsiders. Some CO's were friendly, but most had a very business like approach. At the ranges from the ground OP's, we were indicated the targets; the landmarks were not too prominent, and the target indication was the most difficult thing. After the targets had been indicated and checked back by us, we were to get airborne and then adjust the fire to the target from the air. The perception of the target, when seen from the ground, was quite different to when viewed from the air, so the targets were sometimes mixed up. If we missed the target, we would receive very adverse comments. The CO's, particularly the ones we described as Sheikh's in Artillery, would sarcastically call us Air OP type. They would say that we did not know our gunnery well. They had a very narrow outlook and view. One had to bear with it. All this prejudice built up as there were no actual targets. On the very first occasion, during the battlefield of 1965 war, the real and live targets appeared. There was no problem. In fact, as Air OP, the pilots performed exceptionally well, and it was recognised by all. We missed no target.

Air OP was based at PAF Chaklala, and so we lived at the PAF Officer's Mess Chaklala. The atmosphere in the PAF Messe's was tranquil as compared to the Army Messe's. Air Headquarters was located at Peshawar. For all meetings and discussions with GHQ, the Senior Air Force Officers were visiting Rawalpindi fairly regularly. They would stay in the PAF Officer' Mess, Chaklala. We thus had the opportunities to meet with them frequently. The basic flying unit in the Air Force is a

Squadron. Since every pilot is required to put in a minimum of certain hours of flying a year, he is attached to different Squadrons to do that. This provides an excellent opportunity for the senior pilots to visit the Squadrons and do the flying. They also get to meet the junior pilots currently serving in the Squadrons and interact with them. Squadron tea bar provided an excellent forum for both the senior and the junior pilots to meet and share their experiences. When you fly together in one organisation, the flying skills are clearly known to each other. Each one has to prove that he can handle the aircraft efficiently and skillfully, there is no room for bluffing your way through. You clearly stand out as a pilot and are judged and assessed continuously. It is for this reason that those who go to the top in the Air Force, have to be competent and accomplished pilots. Professionally, prove yourself equal to the task and flying also breeds a strong sense of comradeship and bonds of affinity. These are truly reflective of the routine and life in a Squadron. The harmonious and affectionate attachment permeates. The same pattern of association is shared in the mess. Living in a mess, we met everyone and developed a very informal and homogenous relationship with each other. PAF was at that time a relatively small service. We got an excellent opportunity to know them all, seniors and juniors alike and over time the links became stronger and stronger.

The No.1 Air OP Flight was a small organisation of one CO and four pilots. We had been identified and affiliated with the PAF in all our activities. In the next course of Air OP pilots, Captain's Zafar and Babar, of my course, joined us. I had been the only Army Officer living in the PAF Mess, and so I was jubilant at their arrival. Now, we appeared a group and more prominent at that too, Zafar had a bright red Singer sports car, which gave us both freedom of movement and notoriety.

The life in the Air OP was routine: taking part in the Army exercises, taking Artillery shoots at the ranges and doing our own drills for the operations from the ALG's. One such occasion of the occupation of ALG may be is worth mentioning. We were to occupy an ALG near Sialkot. Babar was in charge of the ground party, which was to do the recce, identification of the location and then the preparation of the strip. As I flew in the area, I saw the firing of lights to indicate the location of the strip. I flew overhead to have a detailed look. The length of the strip did not appear to be the standard 250 yards; it looked much shorter. I made another run, which further reinforced this observation. I first thought to return to the main strip, but Babar was making frantic gestures to me, asking me to land. Thinking that I should not shy away, despite my serious reservations, I decided to descend. I was very careful in my approach, maintaining the minimum speed, and touched down at the very start of the strip. As I landed, I started applying maximum brakes to stop the aircraft, but the strip seemed to be running out. Towards the end, I saw a drain, and just as the thoughts of the aircraft crashing into it started crossing my mind, I saw Babar along with another OR rush and hold the two pylons of the plane. Through a joint effort, we just stopped the aircraft before it could tilt over on hitting the drain. As I came out in utter exasperation, I asked Babar the length of the strip he had prepared. Typical of his usual exhilarating self, he exclaimed it was full 250 yards. As I looked at him, giving the stare of impossibility, he was indicating with his hands and verbal explanations, that the strip does not end at the drain; it instead turned left. I was amazed. How can an aircraft on its landing run suddenly change its direction on arrival near the drain? These were the idiosyncrasies we had learned to live with. Only Babar could perceive it! Luckily, we all survived.

The Army exercises that we were taking part in gave us the opportunity to meet and watch the people in higher command. General M. Ayub Khan had taken over the command of the Army as the first Pakistani Commanderin-chief. He had an impressive personality; he was confident, domineering, precise in his observations of higher command's and overall an effective commander. There were some able officers, but then there were the others who could only throw their weight around by just the years of service that they had piled up. They wanted that to be counted. In their demeanour and their approach in command, they would endeavour to cover up their lack of professionalism through this cloak of experience. They would not elaborate on any details of this, lest they are found out. When one looked at the record of service of most of the senior officers of pre-independence era, few had any distinguished career to speak about. One account of an exercise," November Handicap" may throw some light on this. I was reporting the enemy tanks approaching from Sohawa towards Dina through the dry bed of the nallah. The response that I was getting was that the appreciation had been made. The country is not tankable. Luckily, in the actual battle of 1965, all the information reported by Army Aviation was very accurate and reliable and acted upon seriously.

In 1954, I did my flying Instructor's course with the PAF. The Flying Instructor's School had moved from Risalpur to Chaklala. They were in the same hanger as the Air OP Flight. One end of the hanger had the offices of No1 Air OP Flight, and the other now housed the Flying Instructor's

School. I just had to cross the hanger to reach the FIS; incidentally this hanger is now the presently a complex of the Islamabad International Airport. Flight Lieutenant (later Squadron Leader) Rahat and Flight Lieutenant (Later Air Marshal) Inam-Ul-Haq were our instructors. Three officers from PAF, Flight Lieutenant (Later AVM) Sadr-ud-Din, Flight Lieutenant (Later Group Captain) Aslam Khan and Flight Lieutenant (Later Group Captain) G.S. Butt and I from Air OP were together on Flying Instructor's Course No 4. I was doing the course on Auster V aircraft. After doing our patter[2] in the air, when we had some spare time, Rahat would sing some songs as he was a decent singer. I also did some flying on the Harvard Aircraft, which the PAF was using as a trainer. The few month's stay at the FIS further helped in developing a close and personal relationship with many PAF officers. Some of them, Flight Lieutenant (Later Air Commodore) M. Khaqan Abbasi, Flight Lieutenant (Later Air Chief Marshal) M. Zulfikar Ali Khan, Flight Lieutenant (Later Air Commodore) M. Ashfaq Mian, are among the many people who became splendid friends. We maintained these close relationships throughout for the rest of our careers and even after retirement. Some have since passed away, but those of us who are still alive, remain in close contact with each other. Since the Senior PAF Officers were visiting Chaklala regularly, and some were visiting FIS too, I got to know most of them well. Group Captain (Later Air Marshal) M. Rahim Khan came over to the FIS, at the end of our Course. He complimented me for doing well on the Course and getting better grades than the other PAF Officers on the course.

Air Marshal Asghar Khan, Air Marshal Nur Khan, Air Marshal Rahim Khan, Air Marshal Zafar Chaudhry and many others we knew during our stay at PAF, Chaklala; became Air Force Chief's. Another very notable person was Air Commodore M.Z. Masud (known as Mitty). What was impressive about the Air Force was that all those who were reaching the higher ranks, had proved themselves to be outstanding pilots? Their professional capability had been thoroughly established and tested. I cannot explain it, but being expert pilots also showed the strength of their character. They were all men of high integrity, had good moral values, and were exceptional officers. In comparison, we could not say this for all our Army Senior Officers. This comparison, I have made all along. Even amongst the officers of the post- independence period, this general comparative assessment between PAF and Army Officers would still be valid. Air Force has been extremely fortunate in that they have had a chain of respectable and highly professional Commander-inChief's.

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[2] it is term used for flying instructions to students

The only exception about whom I may have some reservations is Air Chief Marshal Shamim. I would not like to further elaborate on that.

Another link we had developed with the PAF officer's was through their freighter Squadron based in Lahore. The freighter aircraft would come from Lahore to Chaklala to undertake flights in support of troops at Giglit and Skardu. We got to know them all very intimately. Flight Lieutenant (Later Air Commodore) Bakhsi, Flight Lieutenant (Later Group Captain) Zahid Butt and many others became superb friends. Many times on weekends, we would fly to Gilgit, stay the night with Gilgit scouts and enjoy the hospitality of Major (Later Lieutenant Colonel) Sahibzad Gul, popularity known as Sabzy. The next day we would spend time trout fishing, and we would return in the evening. On some occasions, we would fly to Lahore for the weekends. Zafar's red sports car was also carried on the freighter, and it provided us mobility at Lahore. These contacts became intense; Bakshi and Zahid, in particular, became our very close friends.

One evening, while we were sitting in the mess, Bakshi asked me if I would like to come to London with him. He was taking a freighter aircraft for an overhaul to Bristol. I thought he was joking, but he insisted that he was sincere in making this offer. He told me that the only problem is that he was leaving in 4-5 days. There was no time to get my name put in the official manifest of the aircraft. The only possibility was that I should reach Dahran, his first stop on route to Bristol, and then I could fly with him. I took him on in this offer. I took one month's leave and reached Dahran. It was the summer of 1956. When Bakshi arrived there, he took me on board the Aircraft, and I flew with them to Bristol. It was a slow flying aircraft. After stopping the night at Beirut, Tripoli and Malta, we flew into Bristol the fourth day. My elder brother was living in London. After finishing his studies, he was working in the PATLO office of Pakistan Embassy in London. I stayed with him in his flat. Captain (Later Lieutenant Colonel). S.M. Akhtar of our course was posted in the main embassy. In his office, I saw a man who was working as a messenger, and his face looked very familiar. Akhtar told me he was our Chief Instructor at the Infantry School, Quetta. I was rather surprised. Akhtar said that it was quite common for the retired British Army Officers, to take up these minor jobs. They do this to supplement their income. I enjoyed my first visit to London, did the sightseeing and visited Wimbledon to watch some tennis too. On the way back, I tried to hitchhike my way back on the freighter, which was leaving Bristol after the overhaul. Flight Lieutenant Z.A. Khan was the Captain. He took me up to Rome. Since my name was not in the manifesto, he did not take any chance beyond. I also thought that I should not cause him any embarrassment. I took a commercial flight and returned to Chaklala, via Karachi. Back at Chaklala, life went along as before. Nothing very significant happened. Zafar, Babar and I were all promoted to the rank of Major.

As a policy of rotation back to our parent arm, Artillery, I was posted to 19 LAA at Malir. I was rather amazed; I was a field gunner and should have been reverted to a field unit. The logic of going to an AA unit was beyond me and only explained the whimsical nature of the MS Branch. Our CO was Lieutenant Colonel Nanjiani, and Brigade Commander was Brigadier S.M. Aslam, who was our 2 I/C in 12 Medium Regiment, and who I had known earlier. He was known as Aslam “Bullshit” in the Army; Aslam “Happy” and Aslam “ MC” were other nicknames of other Aslam’s serving in Artillery. My stay at Malir was a pleasant period. I had to do my young office’s Anti-Aircraft (AA) Artillery Course as I was new in this branch of Artillery, and although it proved to be a somewhat technical Course, it turned out to be of my liking and I did well on this.

## CHAPTER 6

## GENERAL AYUB'S MARTIAL LAW, TENURE WITH ARMY AVIATION SCHOOL, STAFF COLLEGE AND RETURN TO UNIT

In 1958, I was posted back to the Army Aviation. From the No. 1 Air OP Flight it had become No.1 Army Aviation Squadron. We had recently received the L-19 aircraft from the USA and the days of the Auster Aircraft were over. I did my transition to L-19 aircraft. Just at that time, the first Martial Law was imposed by General M. Ayub Khan. We were a bit excited. There was a feeling that the Army will be able to restore some political stability in the country. The game of musical chairs in the political sphere of the country had not been auguring too well. I was detailed to fly Major General M.Wisal Khan, one of the Deputy Martial Law Administrator (DMLA). His areas of responsibility were Faisalabad, Gujranwala and Sialkot. We first flew into Faisalabad, where a group of some 200-300 industrialists had gathered. Major General Wisal Khan started off with a sermon, warning them all that they had been depriving the Government of its due revenues by evading all taxes. He bluntly rebuked all the industrialists and warned them that this will not be allowed to continue. I remember one textile tycoon, Mr Yousaf Sehgal, got up and said that the industrialists had served this country well. As he just started to elaborate, he was immediately interrupted by Major General Wisal and told to sit down. He pointed out towards his briefcase and said that in this he had all the details of all the big industrialists who were the defaulters. The list contained all the names and the exact amount due. He told them that if they did not pay these taxes, they would be severely punished. I was impressed by the efficiency of the Martial Law authorities, as to how they had collected all this data in such a short time. Next, we flew to Gujranwala, where it was a repeat performance. I soon realised that it was a bluffing game. There was no accurate data available, but in typical Army style, the Martial Law Authorities had embarked on a campaign of administering warnings to the tax paying segments and to try and squeeze the maximum out of them in the ways of revenues. They somewhat succeeded in this. We soon started learning through the press that ever-increasing amounts were being paid and some cumulative figures were regularly being issued. It was not long before the feeling that the Army had no particular background and prowess to run the country; it began to dawn on me. We were too junior to say anything and as such were only destined to play the part of silent spectators in the hopes that things would improve. I had my own thrill of Martial Law; I got Nine

Thousand Rupees from my mother and had used it to purchase a new car, an Opel Kadett, from Germany. It had arrived at Karachi, and I along with Zafar went to collect it. The 2 I/C of my last unit 19 LAA, Major Gulzar, was heading a military court. I had taken a short leave, and so I wanted to get the customs clearance for the car as early as possible. I went to his court. He was about to hear a case, and he asked me to sit down with him on his bench as a guest. A lawyer appeared before him, and as he stood waiting to make his argument, he placed his hands inadvertently on the table. Major Gulzar picked up his cane from the table and banged it hard on the table, proceeding then to give him a dressing down, using inappropriate language (Army Slang) and in a formal tone; he told the lawyer he did not know the manners of standing in a military court. Upon looking at his black coat, he got further infuriated and in a harsh tone asked him where his black robe was, admonishing him further for being improperly dressed. The poor lawyer profusely apologised and begged for an adjournment. As he left, Major Gulzar told me that the decorum of the court is of paramount importance. I was amazed, but kept quiet on the matter and explained my purpose of visiting him. With a smile and confidence, Major Gulzar told me that there was nothing to it. He phoned some higher up in the customs department, and shortly thereafter, a gentleman from Customs appeared in his court. His rank I do not remember, but the name was Mr Mascarenhas. He gave him precise instructions and told him that all the customs formalities must be completed by to-day. He made a promise and asked me to come to the west wharf to collect the car the next day. I handed over to him all the papers. He calculated the amount to be paid as customs duty and the other allied charges, which I handed over to him. The next morning we reached his office; I collected the car and proceeded to drive straight to Lahore in the evening. I recall these incidents, not because they are important, but mostly to reflect in hindsight as to how the Martial Law gradually started to distort the system. The authoritarian military courts could hardly administer justice. The civil administration could not be improved by one time instructions of expeditious customs clearance, as done in my case. This needs to be streamlined, made effective and efficient through some well thought out measures. The entire government administration has to be tuned up. For that, Army is hardly the set up to bring lasting changes and improvements. It serves to achieve only short- term and temporary results. This lesson we did not learn. Unfortunately, we have been condemned to keep making the same mistakes, hoping that the next Martial Law will usher in a period of good governance and prosperity.

Air OP School was opened on January 1, 1959. Lieutenant Colonel

(Later Lieutenant General) A.B. Awan was the Commandant, Major Saleem Ullah was the Chief Instructor, and I was the Flight Commander. We had four other flight instructors on our team. That was the first regular course, and since then the activities of the School kept enlarging. It today serves all the needs of our Army Aviators, both Fixed and Rotary Wing. In looking back, it is with immense satisfaction that I recall how it has matured and grown.

Since the US Military had started to provide Aid to Pakistan, they had a United States Military Assistance Group (USMAAG) office located in Pakistan. It had a small team and was headed by a full Colonel. Since Army Aviation was regularly receiving the L-19 Aircraft, we were associating with them both officially and also socially at the Rawalpindi Club. The club served alcoholic drinks at the time, and even there were regular dancing sessions. Also, the capital had shifted from Karachi, so the club was full of Civil Servants working at Islamabad, and it provided an atmosphere to relax and enjoy socially in the only facility available in the area. Major General Yahya Khan and some other senior Army officers were also regularly visiting the club and would relax and enjoy. The Young Foreign Minister, Mr Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his wife were also actively taking part in club activities. The atmosphere was very conducive, and everyone was mixing with each other with no inhibitions. We as a group of young officers from Army Aviation were also actively participating in the entire social activities at the club. In our small group, we had Major M. Zafar Khan, Captain's Faiz-ud-din Brandon and Khwaja Shahbaz Ghaib and I, as regular visitors. Zafar had a red sports car, and so it was very handy. But we all were enjoying life and fully taking parts in all the activities. The officers and the families of the USMAAG were also active and would be regular visitors, and that provided cosmopolitan atmosphere.

In August 1959, I proceeded to the USA to undertake an Aviation course and remained there for nearly one year. It was an excellent education, not only for flying but also learning the culture of the people. Fort Rucker was in the state of Alabama. The discrimination against the blacks had been institutionalized in the South. The people otherwise were warm and open-hearted. There were about 60 officers on the course with me; some of them were Senior Officers, a few full Colonels and rest a host of Lieutenant Colonels and Majors. I was regularly invited to the homes of all married officer's. They were very hospitable and would treat me as part of the family. The other's staying with me in the Bachelor Officer's Quarters were equally good friends. We went around together. I made my small intimate group. Out of affection and friendship, they had nicknamed me “Mike.” Some contacts I still maintain. We would discuss freely and candidly all subjects that appeared to be of significance. Pakistan was part of CENTO and SEATO. India was aligned with Russia, so there was a lot of warmth for Pakistan. Also, they realised the importance of the Geo- Strategic location of Pakistan. The impression that I gathered was that they were not too much attune to the ground realities of distant lands like Pakistan and India. In fact, I would say that they had a rather naïve outlook. But once the facts and discerning objectives and perspectives were explained to them, they would give their direct support and commitment. This aspect and belief was sufficiently strengthened, in all my many interludes and interjections with them subsequently. Of course, if ever there was a clash between our national interests, they would look towards their own and ignore all other considerations.

Universities in the US had a custom that entailed foreign students being invited as guest speakers, and so many of my weekends there were spent on various forums. There were many places in the vicinity, but later on, I got invitations from even distant faculties, some even outside the State of Alabama. At that time General Ayub Khan had introduced the new system of Basic Democracies in Pakistan. The Pakistan Embassy was regularly sending me a lot of literature and information on this. The central theme of all my addresses was Pakistan, its background, its future hopes and aspirations. I would dwell a little on the religion of Islam and as to how it was intertwined in this newly created State. The question-and-answer sessions were much more appealing; the range of questions was broad, and it seemed more productive. But predominantly questions asked to explain how and why Islam allows four wives and on this new concept and system of basic democracies. The answer to the question regarding four wives, I had prepared in the light of the Islamic injunctions and teachings. It was mostly well received, and I believe the audience understood the logic and the reasoning behind it. Of course, I am sure they were not prepared to adopt it. What baffled them the most was the reply on Basic Democracies! We had been brainwashed, and I was very enthusiastically and eloquently highlighting the chief merits of it. I would, while elaborating, describe it as the real grass root democracy. They could not understand as to how a system, which could handle dayto-day union level or municipality related problems, is advocated as a replacement for a democratic form of government. They would grill me in detail. The theme was that a truly democratic system would deal with issues of national importance, both domestic and international, and would primarily aim at throwing up leadership at the national level. With the best of effort, I could not explain it away. The real morbid intentions of its authors were only unveiled when the Ayub regime rigged this system to win the elections against Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah. The great industrialist wizard son, Gohar Ayub, went berserk celebrating the victory, blazing away guns and killing people on the streets of Karachi. It was abominable. These feelings against this system and its absurdity crawled in gradually in our mind.

On return from U.S.A, in the middle of 1960, I continued to instruct in the Army Aviation School, which was still at Chaklala, but the No. 1 Army Aviation Squadron had moved to Dhamial, which became the new home of Army Aviation. Zafar, Babar, Ghalib, Faiz and all others posted to 1 Army Aviation Squadron were working at Dhamial while I was still with our workplace at Chaklala, along with a small team. But we had been provided with the Officer's Mess accommodation at the Central place of Mall at Rawalpindi and thus were living together there. I passed the Staff College entrance examination, but since I was required at the School, I could not proceed to Quetta in early 1961. While in States my friends had me motivated to start playing golf, a practice which I continued even after coming back home. General Musa and another handful of players, mostly senior Army Officers were regular players too. We had foursomes arranged, and at the end of the game, all of us would sit on the lawns of the Golf Club and have tea together. There were no greens, but only chocolates made of oil, loose earth and sand, were available for putting. The social life at the club was as active as always, but very restricted. Time went past by quickly. But another homely aspect was that our group had become part of the family of Colonel McCaddon, who was head of USMAAG. We had met each other frequently, both at the club and at his house. His daughter, Peggy, was also full of life and very much wanted to be part of our activities. One day we had an afternoon and whole evening invitation to his house for a game of Bridge and dinner. As I returned from work, I started to change. When Zafar and the others of our group arrived from Dhamial, I asked them to get ready so that we could leave, but was surprised to hear that they would not be joining me as they had been called to GHQ by DMI Brigadier (Later Major General) Nawazish Ali. The Brigadier had also warned them against fraternisation with foreigners, claiming that it was against Army policy. The message was simple. I decided to drive to the house of Colonel (Later General) Tikka Khan, who was our Deputy Director of Artillery at GHQ. When I met him and told him that I could not understand the logic behind these policies and these orders, he calmly said that this is the official policy. However, he stated that there was a provision that the officers could socially mix with the foreigners so long as they had the permission of an appropriate higher authority, which he then proceeded to give me. On my return when I told the others about this, they still refused, stating that there were clear orders of the DMI, which they could not violate. So we abstained from our engagement for that evening. When we did not turn up, Colonel McCaddon called to find out the reasons as to why we have not arrived at his house as arranged. When we gave him the background, he was furious as to what kind of policy GHQ was following in treating the American Officers and their families, who are here to promote the relationship between the two countries and provide the needed military assistance to Pakistan. The next day he just barged into the office of General Musa, the Commander- in-Chief of the Pakistan Army. He frankly and bluntly complained to General Musa as to why Pakistan Army was treating them like this. He also told him that he and histeam of officers and their families want to feel at home and promote the goodwill between the two countries and he could not understand the wisdom of the policies being pursued by Pakistan. He also mentioned that these boys are like part of my own family and you eye it differently. General Musa was very embarrassed, and immediately called DMI Brigadier Nawazish to come to his office. He was furious with him for this diplomatic misdemeanour and told him that he must call these officers and order them to mix immediately with Colonel Mccaddon and his family. This he did, and our social relationship with the American family was resumed fully and uninhibited. In fact, Zafar who now lives in England regularly visits the surviving member of the household, Peggy, in America. This I mention to mostly to put on display the illogical rigidity of some of the policies created by higher command of the Army.

At the end of 1961, I was told that I would be required to appear in the Staff College entrance examination again. I had passed the exam in 1959 and 1960 and should have proceeded to attend the Staff College, but was stopped because of service requirements. My reasoning did not prevail with GHQ and I was required to appear again in the exam. I passed the exam for the third time and was detailed to attend the Staff and Command College in Quetta. My mother prevailed in getting me to agree to be married before leaving for Quetta. My last fling as a bachelor, I had on board the ship "Victoria," on a voyage from Karachi-Hong KongKarachi. The ship stopped at Bombay en route. The passengers could visit the city. I went to see the house where Quaid had lived in before the creation of Pakistan. Bombay, in my impression, was an overcrowded town and apart from the Malabar Hills area, it was not too clean a place either. From Bombay, three Indian couples boarded the ship. They were very cultured people. It was a friendly group comprising a Muslim couple, a Hindu couple and a Parsi couple. They invited me to the group, and we enjoyed our trip. On the way back, the King of Malaysia was to come on board the ship as he was on an official visit to Pakistan. The ship was diverted to Penang to pick him. Major General (Retd) Sher Ali Khan, who was our Ambassador in Malaysia and who I had known well from my PMA days, also travelled in the ship from Penang to Karachi. I spent a considerable amount of time with him. He narrated, out of frustration, the story of how he resigned when General Musa was made the Commanderin-Chief, and how only three other Generals had left, while the rest served under General Musa. His frustration stemmed from the fact that the only quality that made General Musa better qualified for the post than the rest was his unerring loyalty to General Ayub. He believed that it was not a good omen for the Army and that its efficiency as a fighting organisation would suffer. I could not openly support him on this prognosis.

But in my heart, I believed that a decline had been set in. What bewildered me was that a man so critical of General Ayub, who was now the President of Pakistan, could agree to represent his Government? One may describe this as the distortion of our values.

In January 1962, I got married. It was rather adventurous of me to proceed to Quetta by road via Fort Munro. Someone had wrongly advised me it was a decent road. It turned out to be mostly shingle. It was also deserted. Luckily, after spending the night at a levy post, we reached Quetta safely the next day.

The year at the Command and Staff College was a wonderful experience. They had a well thought out and well-prepared curriculum. The team of instructors headed by Brigadier (Later Major General) Bilgrami was impressive. The course adequately prepared the officer's for the staff assignments, but the command aspect was less emphasised on. It could be summarised that command element cannot be instilled, but has to be built upon and gained through experience. This aspect is very lamentably neglected in the Army. This could well be summed as the biggest curse.

At the end of the course, the Chief Instructor, Colonel (Later Lieutenant General) A.I. Akram and the Commandant interviewed the officers. In my interaction, the Chief Instructor had kind words and expressed his high opinion of me, but he asked me to guard against being blunt. Brigadier Bilgrami was very personal, prudent, precise and yet affectionate. He told me I was his cadet in PMA and that he was fond of me. He explained at some length the salient aspects of the last report, which was highly complementary. He explained to me that my bluntness was not sitting well with some instructors and was not a quality that was appreciated in an institution such as the Army. He was also taking me in confidence to reveal that though some instructors who were not in my directing staff in all the four terms I was there, but in the final grading conference, they were passing strong criticism against me to bring down my grades But he overruled them with the remarks they had not understood me, and thus kept my grade at the top. This is what he was emphasizing to me. It was most unusual that he gave the names of the two so involved, and that was moving. I was most grateful to him for being candid to me and also appreciative of my performance at the Staff College. His last words were, "In the Army being outspoken, is a trait which is not always appreciated and liked by all. There are always some detractors." His message and advice was very clear. In my heart, the thought arose that do I need to change myself. My personal reflections were strongly suggesting that I should not recompose myself. It glared that this attitude had many pitfalls and quandaries. My qualms of conscience were still dictating me to remain what I was.

I was posted to 22 Field Regiment, Peshawar. The Military Secretary's Branch thought that I did not have enough experience in field artillery. I had earlier on wondered about the wisdom of planning of career rotation when they posted me to Anti-Aircraft unit. I was happy to be back in Peshawar. The command of a battery is not that exciting and testing, as one had to work under the shadow of the Commanding Officer. Lieutenant Colonel Sher Zaman was not very inspiring. I tried to retain as much independence as I could. Playing golf in the evening on the lush green, Peshawar Golf course was a great pleasure. Air Marshal Asghar Khan was very considerate and kept me in his foursome. One evening my wife turned up on the golf course. Air Chief got up from the table where we were sitting after the game and invited her to join us. While chatting with her, he suggested that she should also take up this game. My wife unhesitatingly said, "This stupid game? Never." I was taken aback by her rude remark, but Air Marshal Asghar Khan was unperturbed. He graciously respected her opinion.

We had a great company at Peshawar. Major (Later Major General) Babar, Major (Later Lieutenant General) Ghulam Safdar Butt and Major (Later Brigadier) Faqir Mohammad, were a part of our regular circle of friends. Babar was G-II (Ops), and Faqir was G-II (Intelligence) at 7 Division HQ. Babar was selected to go to USA for training on a helicopter course. I was ushered in to fill his vacancy. Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir was the GOC, and I had the privilege to work with him closely. We worked on the operational plans of the formation. Why the GOC did not closely associate the Colonel Staff, Colonel Iqbal Ahmad and the GSO-I, Lieutenant Colonel Hazur Ahmed, I could not understand. Perhaps it was his style of working. He had a fertile brain; he was thoroughly professional and had a tremendous capacity to work. We worked together at his house till late at night. Faqir Mohd and I would write the plans as he conceived them and dictated to us. Sometimes we would also contribute. He was appreciative and did not seem to mind. The completed plans were then submitted to GHQ.

Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana, the Corps Commander, came to attend a sand model exercise at the Division HQ. Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir was conducting this sand-model discussion. It was tailored like the operational role of 7 Division. All were surprised that throughout the exercise, the Corps Commander had not even once interjected to raise questions and show any interest in the professional conduct of the exercise. Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir was quite brilliant in his exposition and the regulating of the discussions. He, very capably summed up the exercise, and he turned towards the Corps Commander for his last remarks and concluding comments. All that Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana had to say was that he could not understand as to why the colour of the Khaki dress and the black socks of the officer‘s were not matching.

After the Corps Commander had left the headquarters, I went to the office of the GOC. Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir was sitting holding his head in utter frustration. As he saw me come in, he could not help but give vent to his feelings. He exclaimed, "Is this the calibre of our Corps Commander." It was discourteous for me to express my comments, but I wholeheartedly shared his thoughts. In the evening Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana played golf with us. At the end of the game, he told me he was going to arrange my posting to Kharian to organise golf there. I was extremely disappointed at the thought of it. There was an excellent set up at Peshawar, and I was enjoying my tenure there.

Another significant event worth recalling was an outdoor exercise conducted by 7 Division. It was on the new concept of defence. This was done in the Mattani area. All the top brass of the Army had gathered. General Ayub Khan, General Musa and a significant contingent of senior officers from GHQ, were all standing on high ground, overlooking the exercise area. Brigadier Gul Hassan, who was DMO chose not to stay in front along with the other top brass but stood along with me in the rear. The Directing Staff (DS), conducting the exercise, gave the details of how the troops were holding a larger area of defence under this new concept. He was also showing the likely locations of the main strike force, which was to be launched to destroy any penetrations that the enemy would make in these porous defences. He was emphasising the aspect of mobility for the strike force. He made a rather naïve suggestion that they should be provided with bicycles. Brigadier Gul Hassan, could not contain himself, and spontaneously blurted out, “I hope this bastard Gohar Ayub is not setting up a bicycle manufacturing plant.” Aghast, most eyes turned towards him. I was slowly whispering in his ear, “Sir, by the evening, you will be sacked.” His composed response was, “I don’t give a damn.” In the Army, the spirit of stomaching some selected criticism prevailed. Brigadier Gul Hassan survived. What admonition he received, I do not know, as I never discussed this with him later. But he was amongst the few exceptions, which were tolerated. Though the minion advisor’s thrived still a few detractors were graciously accepted.

It was towards the middle of 1963 that General Musa came to Peshawar on an unscheduled visit. There were no exercises or other major training events being held in the formation. He came to the office of GOC 7 Division, Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir, and had a one-on-one meeting with him. After he had left, the GOCcalled me. He confided in me that theCommanderin-Chief had come with a personal message from General Ayub. He was told that he was being considered for the appointment as the next Army Chief, after the retirement of General Musa. But he was warned that he drinks too much. He must control it was the underlying message. The consecution was that his promotion would come only after he adopts moderate habits in his drinking. I was happily surprised that he picked me as one of his confidants. As he broke this news to me, he pledged, “ I have given up drinking from today.” To me, it was an effusion of profound happiness. I held him in high esteem as the new Commander-in-Chief. He faithfully stuck to his promise of not drinking till he was later on shunted out to CENTO Headquarters at Ankara. When the time came for General Musa to retire, he was given extension. What a betrayal of the larger interests of the Army and eventually the country. It did not outwardly affect Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir, and he kept working with the same enthusiasm, zeal and devotion.

Babar returned after attending the helicopter course, and so I returned to the unit. While at Division HQ, we were assiduously issuing written instructions on the GOC’s directives on training. He firmly believed that the junior officers must be given total freedom and full opportunity to promote their initiative, while they undertook the training of their subunits. His specific instructions were that whenever a company of Infantry, a Squadron of Armour or a Field Battery of Artillery, embarks on its training exercises, they must be left alone and totally unimpeded. No senior officer should visit them to throw his weight around and put any overbearing pressure on them. This rational policy decision stemmed from the GOC's firm resolve and conviction that the Major level command is the key to a good unit.

It was the time of the annual outdoor training of all sub-units, units and formations. It was going to start at the level of sub-units and then gradually build up to the collective training of the higher echelons of command. My Battery was to proceed on a two weeks period for its outdoor training. Early in the morning, I lined up the Battery to proceed to our training area. I saw the CO Lieutenant Colonel Sher Zaman also appearing. A little later the flag car of our Commander Division Artillery arrived, and Brigadier Amjad Chaudhry came out. He inquired about my plan and the area of training so selected. I was about to give my reply that suddenly I saw the GOC Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir, synchronise his arrival on the dot. He apparently was closely monitoring all the training programme of the units in his command. From the details provided by the different formations, he knew it was the start of training of my battery. So he deliberately is there. Looking at the CO and the Commander Artillery standing there, he had a laugh. He then said that he thought that his instructions were quite explicit. In a light tone, he exclaimed, "What does poor Mahmud finds on the eve of training of his battery? The CO, the Comd Artillery and the GOC are all standing on his head." It was his subtle way of command, and the message was clearly understood. After that, throughout the two weeks that I was out with the Battery, no one showed up. I think we achieved a lot. I trained the battery at my will and by applying my mind. It instilled confidence in me and helped develop my way of training of the Battery. Later at a dinner at my place, which he always graciously accepted, the GOC asked me to come over to Division HQ to share my experience of training with him. The next day I went over to see him and gave him my input. He discussed all the details very minutely. Finally, he asked me my opinion on whether it was useful! It was an unequivocal yes from me. We were fortunate to have such an exemplary professional as GOC. I was fervently hoping and praying that as per the earlier promise of General Ayub conveyed through General Musa, he would soon be promoted as our new Commander-in-Chief. But to our absolute horror, we found that General Musa was given an extension. One wondered as to the reasoning behind the decision!

The premonitions that surfaced at the visit of Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana to Peshawar were to come true! I was posted to Kharian as second in command (2 I/C) of the 21 Medium Regiment. This was part of 1 Armoured Division, which was commanded by Major General Nasir Ali Khan. One wondered at the logic of an Infantry Officer Commanding the most powerful formation of the Army. I thought he must be an exceptional officer to be entrusted with this critical job. It soon turned out to be a total disillusionment and disappointment.

At the Golf Course Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana met me with a smile and introduced me to Major General Nasir. He asked me to put the Golf Course in good shape. He further told me that all help and support that I need would be forthcoming from 1 Armoured Division Units. I undertook the job in all seriousness and earnest. I was soon to surmise that I was not suited to this kind of activity. It needed spending a lot of time away from the unit and also the besieging and begging of different units for providing the equipment and transport, etc.; was a thankless and unproductive job.

My CO was Lieutenant Colonel Maqbool Mahmud. He was our instructor at the Artillery School. It was his unique trait to be a stickler and somewhat cynic. My relationship with him was cordial, and we also had some family ties. Incidentally, he was the elder brother of Masood Mahmud, of the later Federal Security Force (FSF) fame. He did not like my being away from the regiment for the work at the Golf Course. But he could not help in my abstaining away from unit duties. The regiment was to move over to Tilla Ranges for its annual firing and exercises. I was all set to join them. Only the evening before, the Corps Commander told me to stay back and continue the planning and work on the Golf Course. I did not like the idea, but I could not refuse. The next morning when the regiment was lined up to move out, I appeared in my regular office outfit dress rather than the combat dress. The CO was very flustered at my showing in the improper dress. I told him I was under the instructions from the Corps Commander to stay back. He felt very agitated and asked me why I could not tell the Corps Commander that the unit was moving out for its annual exercises. I explained to him I did! He was totally confused. First, he said that he would personally speak to the Corps Commander, but then did not have enough courage to do so.

The thought of my staying back perturbed the Battery Commanders, and they came over to me. They told me that the 2 I/C is the cushion between the CO and the Junior Officers. They implored me that who would shield them in my absence, from the abrasiveness and the tantalizing of the CO. I comforted them, I will not let them down. In the evening, I went to the Golf Course. I was already on the brink of my frustrations at the non-cooperation of the units. So I quickly decided that I will have nothing to do with this work on the Golf Course. As the Corps Commander and the GOC arrived, I conveyed to them my views and expressed my inability to continue with this task of improvement of the Golf Course. They were both taken aback. The Corps Commander very tersely asked me for my reasons. I told him that my CO and the other officers feel that during the training of the unit, my absence is tantamount to derogation of my duties. Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana dismissed this thought by countering that the absence of one officer would not make any difference. I had to firmly tell him that my principal duty is with the regiment and that I cannot abstain. I also politely told them I could not make any significant contribution to the improvement of the Golf Course. I had to substantiate that it was primarily because of lack of any co-operation of the units in the formation. I do not know what their internal feelings of exasperation were, but with sullen faces, they gave their acquiescence. This imprudence got me the worst ever Annual Confidential Report for the year from the GOC. It did not matter to me and nor was I concerned about it.

I joined the regiment at the Tilla Ranges. All the training, exercises and the firing went very smoothly, and the unit returned to Kharian with some sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. I hope I made my humble contribution and in particular, acting as a buffer between the CO and the other officers of the unit. It was towards the end of 1964 that I received my orders for promotion and to take over the Command of No.1 Army Aviation Squadron at Dhamial. Before leaving Kharian, the thoughts churning in my mind was the level of the professional prowess of the Senior Commanders in the Army. I had seen on one end of the spectrum a man of immense capability, like Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir. On the other end, I also had the misfortune of serving under the abysmal low in professional competence of Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana. Major General Nasir excelled in cunningness and connivance. He was running the formation through the O.C. F.I.U., Major Nazir Fateh-ud-din. He was known as NFD and had earned his closeness to the GOC, through their association of having been to the same school, at the RIMC, Dehra Dun. He and his intelligence minions were swooping around the units, sniffing for any petty and small malpractices. There was a constant flow of information to the GOC.

This was nothing but abominable. A Commander who cannot judge units and officers and men manning it for himself is condemned to be a slouch and a sly. The milieu at Kharian was one of fear, distrust and infamy of command. Thoughts went out how such units/formations will perform in war or a period of crisis. This premonition was soon proved to be true in the 1965 war. It was towards the end of 1964, that I received the orders for my promotion and to take over the Command of No 1 Army Aviation Squadron at Dhamial. I felt happy because it was the Command of the Unit I cherished most. I strongly believed that it is only in Command or better still in battle, that an officer is tested. It is there that he has to prove himself, and in that nothing counts more than the personal example that he sets. If you can give that the soldiers will follow you. And in them we have the finest fighting material. This has been proved time and again. I took over the Command of the Squadron, from Lieutenant Colonel M. Zafar Khan. He was my course mate and my friend from the days we joined Artillery and later Air. OP, which became Army Aviation.

Three of us from Ist PMA Long Course had joined Air OP. I had joined Air OP in 1951, and it was a year later that Zafar and Babar too opted for it. We had been closely associated since then. In the built up of Army Aviation, we had a very vital role, both in training and operational deployment. Babar's flying in the fixed wing had many tales to describe, but once he did his helicopter training in America, and took over the Command of the newly raised No. 3 Army Aviation Squadron, which had been recently equipped with H-13 Helicopters, that he came in his true colours. The cyclic Control of the helicopter probably suited his genius more than those of the fixed-wing aircraft. In, the Army Aviation he was the first to command a Helicopter Squadron, and he excelled himself in this. He used his personal initiative and his instinctive courage to give his flying its image. He led the Squadron from up in front and gave it the distinct personal flair, and was thus most respected. After the Command of the Squadron, Zafar was now leaving for the Staff College, Quetta to attend the Course. On taking over the Squadron, I soon found out it was a thrilled team of officers and men. The officers were an excellent blend of a professional soldier and the technocrat of a pilot. This is where an Army Aviation Pilot has to prove that he is better than the others. I was very pleased to see this state of the Squadron and had to give all the credit to Zafar for achieving these standards and keeping the flag high. Why I reflect on that is, because it was soon after my taking over, that our Operational Deployment started. I hardly had any time to do any training with my new unit, but when the time came they did not let me down. They came out with flying colours. Proficient in their flying coupled with the requisite background of a soldier and imbued with intense desire to perform; they gave their best. There was no case of mistaken identity or misdirection to any of our own troops. It directly reflects on the training that they had received and their knowledge of a professional soldier.

# CHAPTER 7

# KASHMIR: TREACHEROUS CONFLICT

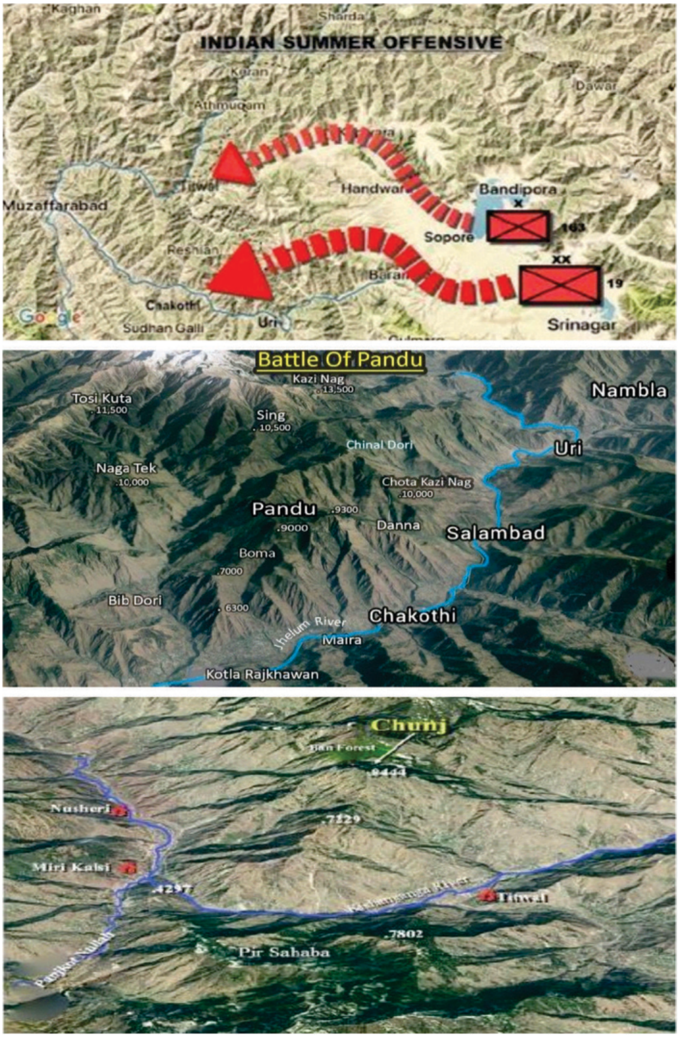
Pakistan and its embroilment in a planned conflict on Kashmir from its infancy is a sordid chapter of our history. This drama was enacted right with the Radcliff Award. Sir Muhammad Zafrullah, who was pleading the case of Pakistan before this Commission in his opening statement, summed it all by stating, "My Lord, a drama is being enacted in this court. We all are here to play our role and part in this. I will play my role as dutifully as I can. I believe that all the decisions have already been made and proceedings in this court are just mere formalities." He proved prophetically correct! A conspiracy had been hatched between the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten and Sir Radcliff. It had all come at the initiative of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. It had been decided that to provide access to India to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, a strip of land in the Muslim Majority area of Gurdaspur District would be awarded to India while adjudicating the partition of Punjab Province. It was part of a poetic British Justice. I am reminded of a line from an English poem to describe this. It goes like this; "Whatever the British do, they do it on principles. Even if they cheat, they cheat on principle." All plans to induct the Indian Army in Kashmir had been made, and provisions for that had been already arranged and kept at the ready.

This is how the seed was sown for a perpetual conflict between the two emerging states. To make the matters more confounded, a decision was also inflicted on Pakistan to keep a Joint Command over the two new and separate Armies. But Quaid refused, they still had a British C-in-C to implement their policies. This left Pakistan with little freedom to use its own Army at its own will, if the situation so arose on any possible conflict that may arise in Kashmir.

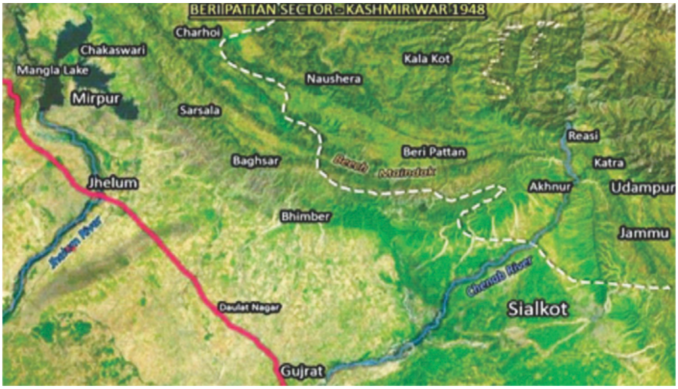
This is how the course was chartered for the future planning and determination of the fate of this state with an overwhelming Muslim majority. When the movement for the seeking of freedom from the Dogra ruler was shaping and picked up its momentum, he signed accession to India to formalise an excuse for the Indian Government to intervene in the state militarily. At first, the dominant Dogra Army of the Maharaja tried to suppress the uprising of the Muslims, through the brutal and naked use of force. At this stage, to help provide some buoyancy to the freedom struggle of the Kashmiri's, a tribal Lashkar was hurriedly raised. This was caused because the poorly unarmed Kashmiri's could not possibly survive against the fully armed and trained Army of the Maharaja.

This immediately showed results as the Dogra Army was made to retreat and the Tribesmen reached up to the outskirts of the Srinagar Airport. Seeing the looming danger, the Hindu Maharaja, in a state of panic or may be a part of the already planned strategy, signed the documents of accession to India. This provided an immediate excuse to the Indians to fly in their troops to Srinagar. The planning for this operation had been made well in advance. Field Marshal Manekshaw has now clearly and candidly described all the details of this conspiracy. This immediately changed the course of the war as the regular Indian Army built up their troops and started assuming the offensive against the disorganized Tribal Lashkars, who had no planning and coordination in their efforts. It fell to the role of some volunteers from the regular Pakistan Army to hurriedly fill in this vacuum; both for planning and also for providing some elements of the hardcore of regular troops. This was voluntary. It was to stem the Indian Offensive launched by their regular Army, which was now threatening and assuming menacing proportions. That they put to grinding halt this threatening headway that the Indian Army was making in their offensive campaign; is a tribute to the spirit and the dedication of this handful of volunteers. They achieved this through grit, gallantry and steadfastness and earned a permanent name in our early history of Pakistan's Wars. Without going into the details, as they have been already covered in many accounts that have been written by those who were a part of this struggle and led it admirably. The names of Generals Akbar Khan and Sher Khan stand out most prominently. These regular officers of the Pakistan Army on their own initiative and against the directives of the Commander-in-Chief Pakistan Army, not only helped in the resistance's buildup against the advancing Indian Army, but also carried out the most daring and bold offensive in the capture of the Pandu feature in the Uri sector and Chunj and Pir Sahaba in the Tithwal sector.This successful accomplishment fully explains the will of this volunteer fighting force and their spirit and motivation to stand up against this forced war of oppression unleashed on the unarmed poor Muslim Majority of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. While the Commander- in- Chief Pakistan Army was under instructions not to allow the regular Pakistan Army to enter the operations in Kashmir as it may lead to an all-out war between India and Pakistan; there were no such restrictions imposed on the Indian Army. In this unequal match, Pakistani Volunteers still gave a very commendable and professional performance.

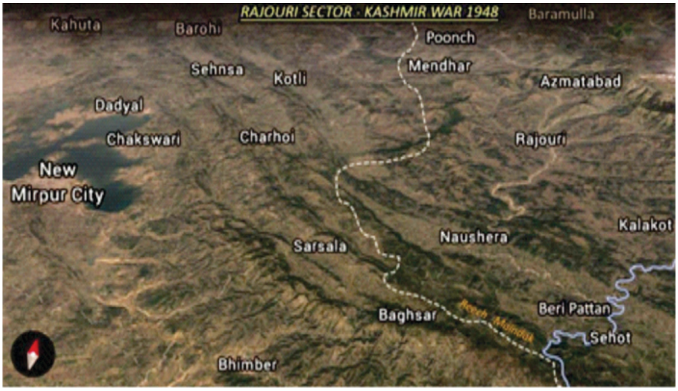
The capture of Pandu and Chunj had secured our positions in the area, and it also denied the Indian Troops any land link up to Poonch from this sector. Thus, this summer offensive was totally blunted and made to peter out.


INDIAN SUMMER OFFENSIVE
Kaghan
Sharda
Keran
Dawar
Athmuqam
Tithwal
Handwara
Bandipora
Muzaffarabad
Sopore
x
103
Reshian
xx
Baran
19
Chakothi
Uri
Srinagar
Sudhan Galli
Battle Of Pandu
Kazi Nag
13,500
Nambla
Tosi Kuta
11,500
Sing
10,500
Chinal Dori
Uri
Naga Tek
10,000
Chota Kazi Nag
10,000
Pandu
9000
9300
Danna
Salambad
Boma
7000
Bib Dori
6300
Jhelum River
Chakothi
Maira
Kotla Rajkhawan
Chunj
Ban Forest
9444
Nusheri
7129
Miri Kalsi
4297
Kishanganga River
Tithwal
7802
Pir Sahaba
Panjkot Nullah

Capture of Pandu and Chunj - Kashmir War 1948


BERI PATTAN SECTOR - KASHMIR WAR 1948
Charhoi
Chakaswari
Mangla Lake
Mirpur
Sarsala
Naushera
Kala Kot
Beri Pattan
Baghsar
Jhelum
Reasi
Katra
Akhnur
Udampur
Bhimber
Jammu
Jhelum River
Chenab River
Sialkot
Daulat Nagar
Gujrat

Beri Pattan Sector - Kashmir War 1948


RAJOURI SECTOR - KASHMIR WAR 1948
Baramulla
Kahuta
Barohi
Poonch
Mendhar
Sehnsa
Kotli
Azmatabad
Dadyal
Chakswari
Charhoi
Rajouri
New
Mirpur City
Naushera
Kalakot
Sarsala
Beri Pattan
Sehot
Baghsar
Bhimber

Rajouri Sector - Kashmir War 1948

After the failure of the summer offensive towards Muzaffarabad, India began preparations for another offensive, this time from Jammu, westwards and north, for the relief of Poonch. OnAugust 24, 1948, there was first news of enemy build up observed at several points in the Naushera Sector. To meet this impending threat, we needed timely action on our part. It took India some time to accomplish this build up, but we still remained tied up not only in mind but also necessarily to create our own capability to counter and react. The reasons I have already explained. Until the 20th of November, the Azad Forces kept holding this Indian offensive. There was a severe fighting at Mendhar, and the Poonch Garrison also attempted a breakout. This was the climax, and within a day or two of this Poonch Garrison was relieved. We lost the total area east of the line Naushera and Poonch, including Mendhar Tehsil, the granary of Kashmir. This was because of the inactiveness of the higher command at GHQ, Rawalpindi, which was in control of the British Officers now serving with Pakistan Army. Many reasons were given. Shortage of troops, the possibility of it flaring out into an all-out war with India and perhaps a lot of foreign pressure, were some strong reservations shown and advanced. But, in the ultimate analysis, it was primarily up to the political leadership to give a timely policy and direction. Unfortunately, it was not forthcoming because of the untimely death of Quaid-e- Azam.

Even so, the Indian positions were most vulnerable to any planned action to cut their lines of supply. It had and in fact still has very long, extended and vulnerable lines of ground communications. Since the buildup of Indians on the main line of thrust in the Uri Sector, which was leading up to Srinagar, was well prepared and reinforced by now, we had to hit them in their soft belly. It was on this concept that a plan was prepared to cut their lines of control in the area of Beri Pattan in the Southern Sector.

This kind of operation hardly suited the mind, and the tactics adopted by the Tribal Lashkar. So some regular troops needed to be inducted for this. This took a rather late approval of the Government. It is rather surprising that within two weeks of this action of the Indians to link with Poonch, a force of 25,000, comprising Azads, Tribesmen and Regulars was raised. Only a portion of this force, if brought up early, could have prevented the link up. It was not to be. But still, it was not too late. After much planning and preparation, this force was ready, and we were in a position to cut in the middle the long line of communication stretching from Jammu to Poonch. This would threaten the very existence of the large Indian Force beyond Naushera. It is to the credit of Major General Tottenham, who was commanding the 7 Division of the newly raised Pakistan Army that he envisioned it, planned it and finally launched it. This he did in total defiance of the orders given by the acting Commander-in-Chief, General Gracey, who had forbidden the use of regular Pakistani Troops and in particular any British Army Officers now serving in the Pakistan Army; to proceed and fight in this disputed area of Jammu and Kashmir. He did this entirely incognito, traveling in civilian clothes and using private transport. Without going into any further details of this operation, it may be highlighted only that when it finally was launched, the Indian Troops completely abandoned this area and it was just left at the beckoning of the Pakistani troops to advance and capture. At this critical juncture, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sensing the gravity of the situation went rushing to the United Nations asking for the ceasefire. This had been in the offing for some time. We did not have to rush into it. We should have accomplished the mission for the start of which we had already lost much time and many opportunities. It was the most fatal and frustrating mistake committed. The blame would squarely be on the shoulders of the political leadership. Regardless of what advice and counseling they got from different quarters, we on our part should have remained firm and in full resolve; to secure our own vital national interests foremost by capturing the aim so planned and set. And unfortunately, we have been condemned to keep repeating this mistake repeatedly.

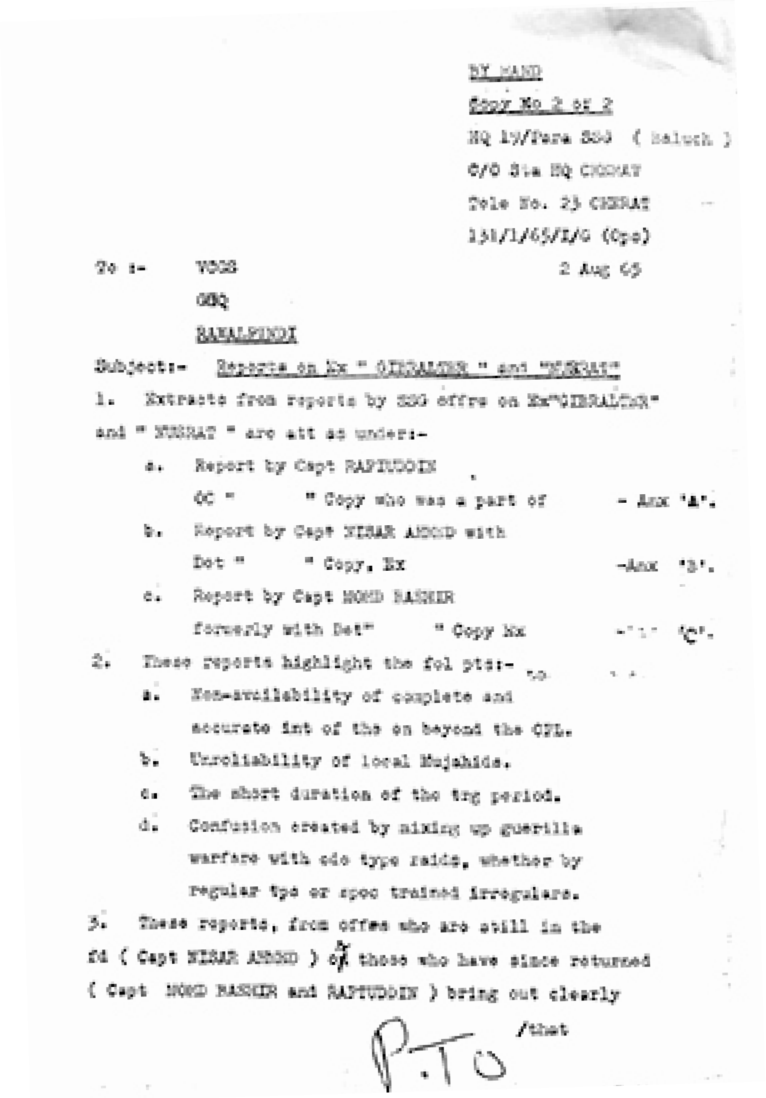
These feelings we had not fully shared and experienced ourselves, as we were still cadets under training at Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. But some of our colleagues had participated in this struggle before they joined the Academy. Notable amongst those were GC N.K. Babar and GC Mahmud Kureishi. We had only some partial idea through their inputs about the course of the operations, but we were enlightened about the dynamism and the spirit of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and the other volunteers to secure their freedom. It was in the beginning of 1949, that Major General Akbar Khan, who had been fully involved in these entire operations and had been nicknamed as General Tariq for this, came to PMA to address us. It was our first detailed and comprehensive exposure to the account of this war of liberation in Jammu and Kashmir. It was a very professional presentation by a mind which had the benefit of all the actual and detailed experience of the unfolding of the events on the ground and also in the minds of some of the key decision makers. Again, without going into the details of it, one may highlight only the most prominent enunciations of this and those who caught our imagination and got embedded in our minds. He started with some details of the background of the raisings of these Tribal Lashkars and their performance. He was clearly full of praise for their contributions and efforts, despite some of the mistakes made by them. The most glaring mistake being, as described by him, was the wasting of time in the capture of Srinagar Airport, when the opportunity so presented itself. The most impressive and the one coming from the depth of his heart was the planning, conduct and the actual capture of Pandu feature in the Uri Sector. It sealed the fate of all further Indian plans of advance in that area. But the most emotional was the description by him of the conduct of the planning and launching of the plan of attack at Beri Pattan. Why we failed to follow it up to its logical conclusion and did not cut the Indian lines of communications between Jammu and Poonch was a question that was raised. He in no uncertain and unambiguous words condemned it.

Finally, choked up in emotions, he said, "Gentlemen, wars are not fought by the armed chaired politicians seated in the comfort of their offices. They are fought by the soldiers on the ground looking into the eyes of the enemy in the thick of battlefield'." These words have been all-embracing and summed up all his frustrations and the bitterness that he endured and experienced. They epitomize on our failings of not relying on collective wisdom and rushing to hasty decisions which have a touch of foreign advice. His words still keep echoing and reechoing in our minds since then. We need a better, more appropriate, logical and essential system of mutual consultation amongst the core people in the corridors of power; to discuss and dilate to finally reach a consensus to come to a logical conclusion on all important issues. It must be based on informed judgment rather than being emotional or tutored. This failing has been haunting us all along and is our bane and misfortune! Whatever, be the outcome of the earlier struggle for the liberation of the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir, the burning desire of the people of the area cannot be kept suppressed and chained indefinitely. The cunningness of the entire motivated plan by the British to leave behind a strong irritant to be exploited, whenever so needed, are now since becoming the lynchpin of the perceptions, plans and the "Greater Game Plan" of the powers to be in this unipolar world.

This has not emerged just suddenly. It has its own history. Without going into the details of the Mckinder and Bresinsiki doctrines, what is pertinent and singular to the struggle of the freedom movement of the people of Jammu and Kashmir is that America has never been sincere with us in this fight. They have used their relationship with Pakistan to meet their own ends and national interests. For illustration, one may cite a message they sent to General Ayub Khan in 1962, which had been kept secret and confidential up till now but has been recently declassified. It was the time of war between India and China on their border conflict over NEFA. The Message was clear, terse, blunt, firm and explicit. He was advised, "Any attack by Pakistan in Kashmir will be considered as an attack on America and the United Kingdom."The justification given was that their troops were present in Ladakh and undertaking some construction work in the area. No such unambiguous warnings were ever given to India to support the cause of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and even with their open, naked and brazen involvement in the attack on East Pakistan. This has kept the fate of the people of the disputed State of Jammu and Kashmir unresolved and the source of permanent friction between India and Pakistan. This perhaps suited the vested interests of these powers in the quest of their bigger geostrategic interest in this region. But you cannot keep muzzled the voice, aspirations and the feelings of these peoples indefinitely.

Having been kept frustrated for so long, the minds in Pakistan's corridors of power kept looking for opportunities to seek a solution to this long-standing problem. The choice was either to forget about the very cause of these deprived Muslims of this disputed area or else to act in support of them. It was implicitly clear India would not act on the United Nations Resolutions and continue strengthening their hold through military occupation. The times were not favorable for Pakistan, and there could be no delay. If some action was to be carried out, now was the time to do so. Very secretively, a two-stage plan of action was formed.

It was an idea shaped through the initiative of Major General Akhtar Ali Malik, GOC 12 Division located at Murree and kept restricted to a small group. The plan was to send a group of volunteers into the occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir to (or Intending to) assimilate internal resistance, and to kindle a movement for the liberation of the area by the local populace would be launched. The execution of this plan, however, was quite flawed. There was little to no attention to detail and minimal coordination. May be that there was not enough time for it. Colonel Syed Ghaffar Mehdi, who was commanding the Special Services Group at Cherat, had some evaluation carried out of this plan. His report that he sent for the eyes of The Chief of the General Staff at GHQ, Rawalpindi, is placed below for record:-



BY HAND
Copy No 2 of 2
HQ 19/Para SSG ( Baluch )
C/O Sta HQ CHERAT
Tele No. 23 CHERAT
131/1/65/I/G (Ops)

To :- VCGS
GHQ
RAWALPINDI

2 Aug 65

Subject:- Reports on Ex " GIBRALTAR " and "NUSRAT"

1. Extracts from reports by SSG offrs on Ex"GIBRALTAR" and " NUSRAT " are att as under:-

a. Report by Capt RAFIUDDIN OC " " Copy who was a part of - Anx 'A'.

b. Report by Capt NISAR AHMED with Det " " Copy, Ex -Anx 'B'.

c. Report by Capt MOHD BASHIR formerly with Det" " Copy Ex -Anx 'C'.

2. These reports highlight the fol pts:-

a. Non-availability of complete and accurate int of the en beyond the CFL.

b. Unreliability of local Mujahids.

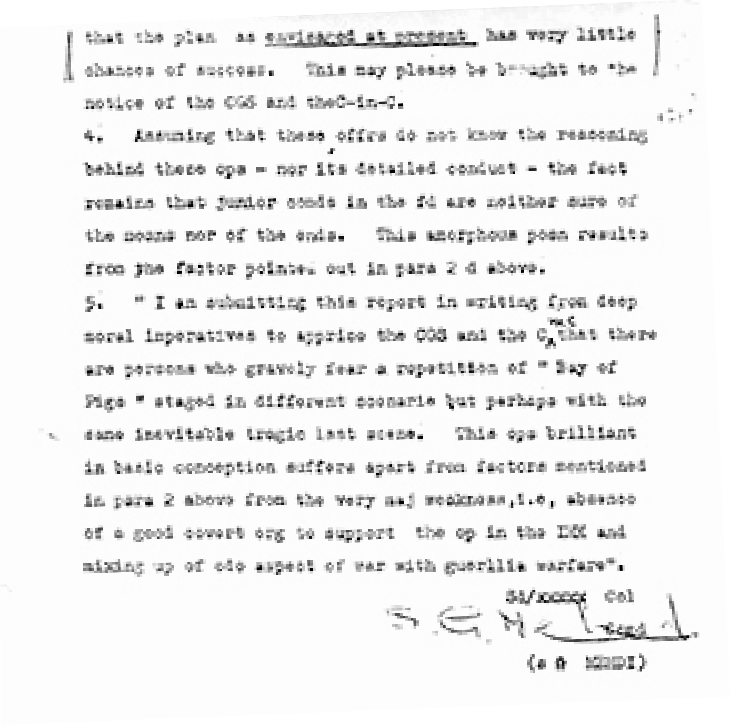
c. The short duration of the trg period.

d. Confusion created by mixing up guerilla warfare with cdo type raids, whether by regular tps or spec trained irregulars.

3. These reports, from offrs who are still in the fd ( Capt NISAR AHMED ) or those who have since returned ( Capt MOHD BASHIR and RAFIUDDIN ) bring out clearly

/that

P.T.O



that the plan as envisaged at present has very little chances of success. This may please be brought to the notice of the CGS and the C-in-C.

4. Assuming that these offrs do not know the reasoning behind these ops - nor its detailed conduct - the fact remains that junior comds in the fd are neither sure of the means nor of the ends. This amorphous posn results from the factor pointed out in para 2 d above.

5. " I am submitting this report in writing from deep moral imperatives to apprise the CGS and the C in C that there are persons who gravely fear a repetition of " Bay of Pigs " staged in different scenario but perhaps with the same inevitable tragic last scene. This ops brilliant in basic conception suffers apart from factors mentioned in para 2 above from the very maj weakness, i.e, absence of a good covert org to support the op in the IHK and mixing up of cdo aspect of war with guerilla warfare".

Sd/xxxxx Col
Comd
(S G MEHDI)

Notwithstanding that, the Operation Gibraltar was still launched. It did not meet the desired aims and objectives. In fact, it proved a failure as enough contacts and liaison had not been done with the local population and their active leadership. In retaliation, Indian forces had begun to look wearier of our troops and this started to assume military reverses for us. This Operation Gibraltar did not envisage any significant military action, as we lacked the resources and strength to undertake that in that area. It also seems that little attention and importance was given to this aspect. What was rightfully appreciated was that we must strike at their most vulnerable point and do so swiftly to provide them with no time to react? The "Operation Grand Slam" was the counter to the inevitable Indian Offensive in retaliation to "Operation Gibraltar." It was an excellent plan, the most logical and most appropriate response. It was a professional approach, and on the lines of the Operation at Beri Pattan, conducted in the war in 1948. The account of this I will endeavor to cover in details and graphically as I was a part of it. But this would rather form the part of the full and total reflection of the entire 1965 War. Of significance is the assessment and appreciation of the situation by Major General Akhtar Ali Malik, when Operation Gibraltar was faltering, and we faced some military reverses in consequence of that. It is reproduced in his own words:-

“Haji Pir Pass did not cause me much anxiety. Because the impending grand slam Indian concentration in Haji Pir after Akhnur could only help us, and they would have to pull out troops from there to counter the new threats and surrender the gains and may be more. Actually, it was only after the fall of Akhnur that we would encash the full value of Gibraltar, but this was not to be.”

# CHAPTER 8

## THE ACCOUNT OF 1965 WAR AS FOUGHT AND SEEN FROM THE AIRBORNE EYES

As a follow up to the launching of Gibraltar Force, “Operation Grand Slam”was key to our success. It envisaged cutting off the tenuous line of communications of the Indian defenses along the Ceasefire Line at Akhnur. Once this was done, however, how could the expected outcome have been expected to be anything other than all-out war? How the highest ranked commanders in the Pakistan Army concluded that the war would not flare up towards international borders and remain in Azad Kashmir is beyond me. I witnessed the entire buildup of sequences and the final flaring up of the war. There are many self-aggrandized accounts which have been circulated in the Country, catching the attention of many people. Nowadays, I hear some of these intellectuals claiming that the Pakistani Military had been defeated in all wars it has fought, and it is precisely that narrative which I want to challenge. Nothing could be further from the truth. Hence these memoirs of mine were motivated to put the record right.

I have read several accounts of the 1965 War. The range of reports encompasses the rendition of war as was perceived through the eyes of the Indians, Pakistanis and the foreign authors. Every description had its own particular ideologically informed version of events. The most comprehensive account I found in the study carried out by the Directing Staff and the students of Command and Staff College, Quetta spread over some years. This has now been compiled as a book called the “History of Indo- Pakistan War of 1965 “by Lieutenant General (Retd) Mahmud Ahmed. It is based on the War Diaries written by soldiers from different units, and interviews and briefings. The book attempts to do a comprehensive study and comparative analysis between the account that he compiled and the official version of events as seen in India. The book suffers from being written by someone who did not experience the events himself, and it remains rather limited. A better example of an account of the War that I believe is on par with reality would be the book, “Men of Steel.” It is based on the dispatches of Major General Abrar Hussain, one who was in the battle’s thick and thus had the benefit of first-hand experience and knowledge. The account lists the details of the battles in chronological order, but I feel that although it alludes to some confusion and brazen blunders committed, it does not go into detail; more so, it does not truly capture the spirit of the troops fighting on the ground. These aspects need to be elicited in some depth and given projection so that the facts stem out in their correct perspective and in actual truth. We must give credit where it is due and highlight all the mistakes made. It is with these feelings I embark on my humble effort, to portray the picture of the battlefield as accurately as I could perceive, read and transmit. I was privileged to have watched the operations closely and being fortunate enough to have close contacts on the ground in the right areas. I had seen the operations mostly in the role of airborne eyes. It provided as graphic a picture of the details as on a sand model. Since I operated only in Chamb and Sialkot Sector, my rendition will be focused more on these operations, but I will try to make informed judgments on the operations carried out in the other Sectors.

Before recording the historical events of the 1965 War and the role played by the Army Aviation to support it, we should pause and reflect on the role assigned to the Army Aviation. When we changed the traditional Air OP role to embrace the overall concept of Army Aviation role in 1959, it was a big quantum jump. From purely the simple purpose of adjusting Arty Fire as Air OP, Army Aviation was embarking on a resolute mission as a fullfledged Combat Arm of the Army. The different teachings and definitions of the role of Army Aviation can best be defined and summarized under the following parameters:-

1. Battlefield Surveillance
2. Command and Control
3. Mobility
4. Fire Power
5. Adjustment of Artillery Fire
6. Casualty Evacuation

Army Aviation in Pakistan was still in its infancy in 1965. It was in transition. The capability for any physical mobility to act as a force multiplier did not exist. The only mobility that it could provide was to enhance the mental ability of the field commanders to take quick and timely decisions. This is a very vital factor. Getting a bird’s-eye view of the battlefields would help maintain the flow of accurate information back to Higher Formations. It would go a long way in clearing the customary fog of war. The Army Aviation had no integral firepower capability. The entire role that it played has to be tested in the concepts enunciated and recorded in that context.

Soon after I took over the Squadron, trouble brewed in Rann of Kutch. This dispute was centering on the region of the former Province of Sindh (India) and Kutch (India). The area is mostly waste marshy lands. Even the dispute dates back to 1843.

Before partition, three attempts were made to settle this dispute. The details are as follows: First Attempt: -

The first attempt was made in 1908 when the Kutch Government wanted to bring the entire area under their exclusive control. To this, the Sindh Government objected. Some meetings were held, but the question remained undecided due to the death of Mukhtar of Rann of Kutch.

Second Attempt: - This time the matter was referred to a commission in 1908. It resulted in a kind of compromise, under which the Sindh Government agreed to surrender half of the area to Kutch. About the remaining half, no rational decisions were taken as to the boundaries, and the area thus remained unmarked. This gave rise to various administrative difficulties, particularly in the border regions, where no effective control could be maintained. This led to many incidents like harboring of dangerous characters by the opposing sides, lifting of cattle and other animals, the police and the revenue authorities clashing over their jurisdictions and many other such like disputes.

Third Attempt: - The Government of India finally intervened in 1938, and a survey party was sent to demarcate Sind-Kutch boundaries. The Mukhtar of Kutch accepted the claim of Mukhtar of Sindh, to the half of the territory. This became unfructuous as the authorities of Kutch later backed out and refused to accept the decision.

Thus, this dispute was inherited by the Government of Pakistan at the time of partition. Sindh Government maintained its claim over half of the area. After partition, India developed a Naval Base at Kandla North of Kutch. They also planned to link this base, with Rajasthan and Central India, by Railway line via Deesa. This Railway line was to pass through the Rann of Kutch. When Pakistan realized the strategic importance of this move, they took up the matter with the Government of India. While this dispute was the subject of correspondence between the two Governments, the Indian forces occupied Chad Bet on February 24/25, 1956. This was hitherto, historically, under the control of Sindh Government. Our Border Police withdrew to Wingi and the whole of the area, Rann of Kutch, came under the control of India.

The Noon-Nehru agreement in 1958 and the Sheikh -Swaran Singh meeting held from January 4 to January 11, 1960, could not resolve the matter. Both sides continued studying the relevant material. While this status quo was being maintained, the Indians built up their troop concentrations in the area since January 1965. There were air violations of the area by the Indian Air Force, from February 1965. At this stage Air Marshal M. Asghar Khan, Commander-in-Chief, Pakistan Air Force, called his counterpart in India. This had an immediate effect, and the violations stopped.

On March 27/28, 1965, the Indians carried a major joint exercise with Combined Army/Naval compliments called “Arrow Head.” Due to all these moves, Pakistan also retaliated and concentrated its troops in the area. 8 Division, under the command of Major General Tikka Khan, was moved to the area. GOC Maharashtra and Gujarat region, Major General P.C. Gupta, MC, had earlier assumed the command of the Indian troops in the area. He had already undertaken some preliminary operations.

Army Aviation saw its initial battlefield baptism in Rann of Kutch. One flight of No.1 Army Aviation Squadron remained deployed there from the middle of April 1965 to May 6, 1965.

On arrival at Badin, the pilots immediately started their familiarization of the area of operations. The customs track, Biar Bhet and the entire control line of the un- demarcated international boundary, was extensively flown over. The navigation in the area was terrible. It was all flat with many sand dunes, which too were drifting because of the wind effect. To provide close support to the advancing troops, two advanced landing grounds were established at Diplo and Ali Bunder. The flight was based at Badin, but during the day it operated from forward strips.

Regular recce missions were undertaken soon after the arrival. Liaison was also maintained with HQ 8 Division, Commanded by Major General Tikka Khan, and the other formations and units. Major S.M.A Tirmizi, brought an Hx13 helicopter and joined the flight. GOC 8 Division used the helicopter extensively. Every day, he flew out regularly to visit the troops. He used this helicopter to carry ice, fruit and other essential elements to the forward troops. It was a slight gesture but was well appreciated by the soldiers in those hot and humid conditions.

Some minor skirmishes had already taken place. The major operation carried out was the attack at Biar Bhet position. In the earlier attacks on April 9, 1965, 51 Infantry Brigade had captured Ding and Sardar Post. I too visited that area and saw this operation and meet with the

Commanders and troops on the ground.

On April 26, 1965, 6 Brigade under the command of Brigadier (LaterMajor General) Iftikhar Janjua was ordered to attack and capture Biar Bhet. 2 FF Battalion under the command of Lieutenant Colonel (later General) Iqbal Ahmed led the attack. The Brigade Commander was right behind the attacking infantry battalion. The attack was supported by Artillery fire, and the Army Aviators successfully and efficiently undertook the artillery shoots. The Indians abandoned the positions, leaving behind a lot of equipment and ammunition. During the adjustment of the artillery fire by Army Aviators, a big Indian ammunition depot at Dharamsala was blown up. It was never clear as to whether the depot went off accidentally or because of artillery fire adjustment by Army Aviators. At night a strange panic gripped the infantry positions at Biar Bhet. A convoy of 10-15 vehicles with their full lights was approaching the position from the direction of the enemy. Own troops considered these to be enemy tanks and were utterly baffled. They considered these to be some strange new tactics by the enemy. Our own troops opened up with all their weapons, including the Recoilless Rifles. The artillery observer, Major Riaz-ul-Haq Malik called for artillery fire. This game went on the entire night. Neither the enemy vehicles were advancing forward towards our positions, nor were our own troops making any move to venture the unraveling of this mystery. The stalemate prevailed, and both sides did not carry out any probing and attempting to resolve this dilemma during the night. At dawn, it was revealed that these vehicles were part of a convoy. These vehicles were 3 Ton Muktiman and were carrying rations and supplies and had lost their way during the night. The drivers and the other crews had hidden underneath the vehicles the whole night. They did not venture to run back to make their escape and were all captured the next morning.

Since there was no enemy air force operating in the area, the L-19's were flying at an altitude of 3000-5000 feet. This provided a very broad coverage of the area and gave the Army Aviators an excellent overview. Army Aviation flew regular missions; carrying out adjustment of Artillery Fire, liaison with the formations and reconnaissance of the entire area of operations. They made some emergency evacuations too, through alternative arrangements of accommodating stretchers in the L-19 Aircraft. Lieutenant Colonel Naseerullah Khan Babar, Commanding Officer 3 Army Aviation Squadron, also came in the area and volunteered to fly as the helicopter pilot. During my visit, I was accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel (Later Lieutenant General) Saeed Qadir, who was commanding the 199 Engineering Battalion at Dhamial, which provided the entire maintenance support to all the Aviation units. GOC 8 Division, the staff and the other unit/formation commanders were all full of praise for the support being rendered by Army Aviation. Special Services Group was also assisted in their recce for any launching in the area.

On the return flight from Badin, I encountered awful weather. On landing at Sargodha, when I received the Met briefing, I wasinformed not to proceed further. Considering that it was important to get back to base, I flew out from Sargodha to Dhamial. Accompanying me was Maj. K.S. Ghalib in another L-19, and Lieutenant Colonel Saeed Qadir was sitting on the rear seat in the L-19 being flown by me. With great difficulty, the salt range was crossed. It was raining very heavily, and the cloud base was very low. After clearing the salt range, the flight to Dhamial had to be undertaken at low attitude to keep the close visual contact with the ground. The familiarity of the area, being the local flying area of Dhamial base, helped. With great difficulty, the two aircraft reached the Sowan River. As we reached closer to the Dhamial Base, a sense of relief was setting in, but torrential rainfall proved that luck was not on our side. The intense rain made a thick wall of pouring water with no forward or downward visibility. The aircraft with great difficulty took a blind turn back. I had already briefed Ghalib, who was following me, to turn back immediately as soon as he sees me start a turn. As I emerged safely out of the thick and blinding rain, I saw Ghalib’s aircraft ahead of me. I was relieved. There were other close calls in my Aviation career, but this was the closest to having a fatal accident.

Dhamial base, which was so close, still proved to be too far. The aircraft flew back to Chakwal. The parking and the security arrangements were made. We took to the comfort of the hospitality of Attock Oil Refinery Camp at Balkassar. We stayed the night with Masud, a golfer friend. He was a keen golfer and was well known to his unexpected guests. Through the communication links of the Attock Oil Refinery, messages were sent to Dhamial Base and the families of these officers, informing them that the aircraft had safely landed at Chakwal. This put at rest all the panic that was gripping Dhamial Base because of these missing aircraft.

After performing regular missions of recce, liaison, Command and Control and some casualty evacuations, the flight of L-19 aircraft and the Hx13 helicopter returned to Dhamial on May 6, 1965.

As the main strike force of the army, 7 Division and 1 Armoured Division had been placed together. Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir was the Force Commander. As narrated earlier, he had prepared three original plans. GHQ had to decide on the final option as the time and opportunity arose.

When "Operation Gibraltar" was launched, the tensions mounted. In anticipation that this may flare up into an all-out war, 7 Division was moved from Peshawar to the area of Balloki. At this stage, 1 Army Aviation Squadron, that I was commanding, was placed under Command 7 Division. When we moved into the area, we made our strip on the left bank of Balloki Canal, just short of the bridge on the main GT Road and camped in the mango archives of Sardar Ahmad Ali, father-in-law of Sardar Asif Hayat Khan. When I reported to GOC Altaf Qadir, he was jubilant to receive me. I was told that 1 Armoured Division had been placed under his command and our operational plans would be on the lines and out of the different choices that had been planned earlier at Peshawar. Since I was familiar with those, he would call me for some operational briefings that he was holding for Major General Nasir, GOC 1 Armoured Division. I had known him. It was not a pleasant interlude with him. I have already narrated the details of my experience of serving under his Command at Kharian. What was coming to my mind now was my astonishment why this man of such pitiable incompetence was still in Command of this most important formation of the Army? It was under these depressed thought of my views and assessment of the capability of Major General Nasir, that I was attending the briefings being carried out by Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir. Painstakingly, and with thorough details he was briefing him on these plans and to the surprise of us attending those, Major General Nasir was hardly paying any attention and would even go to sleep. This really shocked Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir. In utter exasperation he exclaimed, "Look at him. He seems to be least interested. He has even gone to sleep!" Seeing his total lack of interest and utter apathy in shouldering his responsibilities, Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir called General Musa the next day and told him in no uncertain words that Major General Nasir must be removed from his Command immediately. To the horror and surprise of all of us, the answer came as transfer of Lieutenant General Altaf, Qadir to CENTO and the posting of Major General M. Yahya Khan as the new Commander 7 Division.

On seeing the orders, Altaf Qadir broke down and with tears in his eyes, he was emphasizing, "I have trained this formation and am desperate to lead it in battle." But who cared! Even later, when the hostilities were about to start, Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir rushed back to Pakistan from Ankara and pleaded that he be given command of his old formation. It was refused, and this Army went into war with the main strike force broken up and a man of the caliber of Major General Nasir still entrusted with the Command of 1 Armoured Division. Lieutenant General Gul Hassan in his "Memoirs"also opinionated in some details the history of the sordid tale in which this most important formation of Pakistan was handled. He starts off by describing, "The tale of the Armored Division was decidedly heart-rending. It was our elite formation and by far the most powerful in the Pakistan Army." He then narrates how from the beginning Infantry Officers were inflicted upon it. Next he comes to the Command of Major General Nasir Ahmad Khan, again a non-armor officer, and opines, "He was a timid person by nature and remained aloof. How he was selected to command our premier formation is baffling". He surmises, "General Nasir sought refuge from the innumerable complexes he suffered from, including professional insufficiency, by barricading himself behind mountains of courts of inquiries, explanations, and other such contrivances, merely to keep everyone on the hop while he sat securely in his warm seat, supposedly mastering the art of armoured warfare. He was destined to be in Command of 1 Armored Division in the 1965 War."This is in complete conformity of my opinion of him as expressed earlier. The question is as to why he would be in Command? Of course General Musa was guilty of this criminal act, but it was also obligatory on Brigadier Gul Hassan, the DMO with his armour background, to impress upon General Musa of this folly and to plead with him to remove Major General Nasir from this key Command. He has to share the blame for the fiasco.

The breakup of the main strike force is another very sordid chapter in our history. As the tensions were building up, Army had made a request for the raising of two more Infantry Divisions and forming up of another Corps Headquarter to co-ordinate the thrust of the main strike force. It was declined, and we were told that the Finance Minister had refused to provide for the funds needed. One was inclined to wonder who was in charge, at one end General Ayub Khan who was taking the country to war or his Finance Minister who was there to sabotage his efforts! The fiasco at the launch of the 1 Armoured Division at Khem Karan, on September 8, 1965, could have been easily foreseen and averted. I will cover this later. The Squadron moved back to Dhamial by the end of June 1965 and kept waiting in the wings there.

The battlefield test arrived on August 29, 1965. I was called by the Base Commander, Colonel A.B Awan, who asked me to report to General

Officer Commanding 7 Division, at Jalalpur, near Gujrat. The move was scheduled for August 30, 1965. I moved to Jalalpur, taking a small group with me, while the rest of the squadron was located at the Gujrat Airfield. In a meeting with GOC 7 Division, Major General A.M. Yahya Khan, I was informed that 7 Division Headquarters had been moved to this sector with a particular mission. On September 1, 1965, 12 Division was to launch their attack across the line of control towards Chamb. Phase-I of the plan was to secure the line of River Munawar Tawi and was followed by Phase- II, which was the capture of Akhnur. Major General Yahya further told me he along with the HQ 7 Division had been ordered to move into this area, to be prepared to take over the command of the operations in the Chamb-Jaurian Sector later. He was only waiting for an order from the GHQ, which had not yet decided when this would be done.

This is just a prelude to the Army Aviation earning its battlefield spurs. The Army Aviation had already overseen limited operations in the Northern Areas under 12 Division jurisdictions; casualty evacuations, facilitating Command and Control were the missions being performed. But the drums of war had begun to beat louder. The Indians started carrying out limited offensive operations across the Line of Control in retaliation to Operation “Gibraltar” being conducted by the Mujahideen in occupied Kashmir. These Indian counter operations were reaching dangerous proportions. They had to be neutralised. To counter this Operation “Grand Slam” was dovetailed with “Operation Gibraltar.” Hence a decision had been taken to exercise the option of launching a major operation across the Line of Control at Chamb.

Coming to the account of 1965 War and testing the role of Army Aviation in its performance; needs correct military perspective and background. This can be best described in tandem to the operations on the ground and specific description of the performance by the Army Aviation in support of these.

Army Aviation at this stage comprised Base HQ and three Aviation Squadrons, comprising 1, 2 and 3 Army Aviation Squadrons. The entire Army Aviation had an integrated maintenance and logistic support comprising the 199 Aviation EME Battalion and an Ordnance Depot. The base was being commanded by Colonel Azmat Bakhsh Awan, the senior most pilot. The squadrons 1, 2, and 3 were led by Lieutenant Colonel Mian Muhammad Mahmud, Lieutenant Colonel Muhammad Khan and Lieutenant Colonel Naseerullah Khan Babar, respectively. Number 1 and Number 2 Squadrons were equipped with the L-19 aircraft and Number 3 Squadron, which was raised in 1964, had the latest H x 13 helicopters.

Army Aviation at this stage was entirely unarmed and started the 1965 War under these limited capabilities. The battlefield spurs that the Army Aviation won were in these modest conditions. Undaunted, full of devotion, these dedicated officers, who represented a happy blend of professional soldiers and technocrats as pilots, integrated themselves with the ground troops with ease and full understanding of each other.

On September 1, 1965, when at 0300 hours with the firing of guns and the launching of the ground offensive at 0500 hours, operations in Chamb rolled off; the Army Aviation had fully assumed its place in the battle alongside with the field troops. They positioned themselves within one day of their arrival in the area. The transition of the squadron to form a complementary team with Headquarter 7 Division went smoothly and took relatively less time since I was thoroughly familiar with all the staff and commanders at the Division Headquarters. This union proved to very cohesive and paved the way for excellent teamwork. The events of the war as they unfold themselves will provide sufficient credence to this statement. A flight of 2 Army Aviation Squadron had earlier moved to Bhimber, and upon my arrival in the area, I assumed command. Throughout the Chamb operations, I carried out all the planning and coordination of the entire Army Aviation effort in the area. The flight under Major Rabbani had been already assigned to support 12 Division and had integrated itself into the operational plans of 12 Division.

As the tanks and the infantry rolled out of their positions from the Forming up Point (FUP) area on September 1, 1965, at 0500 hours, the Army Aviation was there alongside with them.

The map of the area and the dispositions of own and enemy troops is attached as Annexure-1[4]. The plan of attack for 12 Division had been prepared by Major General Akhtar Malik and is attached as Annexure-2[5]. There were no written orders; all orders were given out verbally. It was a two-pronged assault; in the North, 4 AK Brigade under Brigadier Hameed, attacked with 5 & 19 AK Battalions, with the 8 AK Battalion acting as reserve. An ad hoc armour squadron was under command. Its objective, under Phase- I, was the elimination of enemy troops West of Tawi, and in the Laleal, Dewa, Sakrana, and Chamb sectors. In the South, the 102 Brigade, commanded by Brigadier Zafar Ali Khan, was tasked under Phase I to capture area west of Tawi, including MandialaUllan Wali, Pir Jama. The Brigade attacked with 11 Cavalry, followed by 9 and 13 Punjab. It was tasked to capture Chak Nawan-Chak Pundit by 0900 hours on the 1st of September.

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[4] Annexure-1 is given in Annexures

[5] Annexure-2 is given in Annexures.

Phase-II was the capture of Chamb-Sarkana by 9 Punjab supported by 11 Cavalry by 1200 Hrs on the 1st of September.

Attacks from both directions mostly proceeded on time, but some sporadic resistance from the enemy led to delays, which was caused by enemy positions and pockets at different places, and efficient fire of their recoilless rifles took a toll on our tanks. The terrain posed some problem to armour and slowed the advance of 11 Cavalry initially, however, that did not stop their progress. The tanks, the infantry and the ground observers kept dealing with the resistance very effectively. The role of Army Aviation remained rather limited. Major General Akhtar Malik was leading the attack himself, staying close to the frontline troops and perhaps purposely was not in communication, even with his Tactical Headquarters. The undulating ground provided reasonably good observation in the area, and the airborne eyes were not required to supplement that.

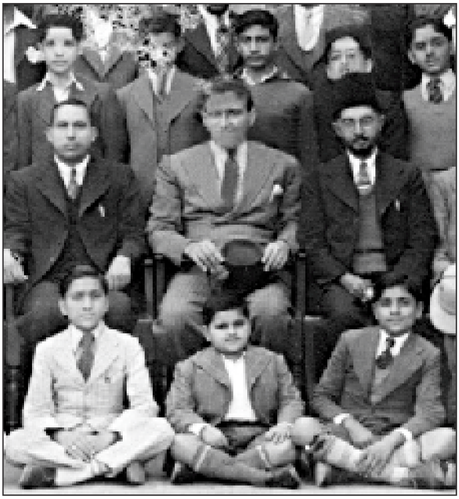
The evening of the 1st of September saw some excitement for the Army Aviators; some L- 19 aircraft and Hx13 helicopters had been flying in the area to carry out the surveillance of the battlefield. The customary fog of war was ever present. The Army Aviation was active but did not perceive any clear picture of the battlefield. Suddenly there was a buzz of excitement. At about 1600 Hrs, four enemy aircraft suddenly appeared, starting an attack on our ground troops. As these aircraft dived in their attack runs, our PAF fighter aircraft majestically could pick them and were in pursuit. Within a brief span of time, all four Indian aircraft were shot down. The interception of these planes was at such a low altitude that none of the enemy pilots could bail out and were all killed. Air Marshal Nur Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of Pakistan Air Force, who was flying in an L-19 aircraft, Lieutenant Colonel N.U.K. Babar and I, who were flying in Hx13 helicopters, witnessed this thrilling encounter. I, along with Captain Askree, the captain of the helicopter, landed at one sight of the crashed aircraft and picked up a piece from the wreckage. It was the insignia of the Indian Air Force, which I later kept as a war trophy.

Just as the excitement was dying out, Lieutenant Colonel N.K.Babar, who had been milling around in the area in an HX13, inflicted upon himself a unique and an unparalleled encounter. It was getting to be the evening of September 1, and our troops had approached Chamb. In the process of their advance, they had by passed some Indian positions on their way, where the enemy forces were raising white flags as a gesture of their intention to surrender. The 13 Lancers and 6 FF had bypassed Pour picket, where they encountered this incident, but as they were progressing to Chamb, they could not spare any effort or time to round them up. Lieutenant Colonel N.K. Babar, Major A.L. Awan, and Captain Akram were surveilling the area on board a helicopter when they saw these white flags. What happened next is best described by Babar himself in an account that he wrote. Was it initially an act of bravery to land the helicopter near this enemy position, or was it stupidity? Did this later lead to a unique manifestation of courage? Let the readers form their own opinion!

"3 Army Aviation Squadron (Rotary Wing) had been directed to provide a helicopter for the transportation of Brigadier Ishaq (Brigade Commander at Rawalakot), from Murree to Rawalakot on September 1, 1965. It was conventional to dispatch two helicopters on missions in Azad Kashmir. In the first helicopter were Lieutenant Colonel (Later Major General) Naseerullah Babar and the 2 I/C Major (Later Lieutenant Colonel) Abdul Latif Awan. The second helicopter had Captain (Later Colonel) Late Mohammad Akram and one other pilot. On arrival at Murree, it was disclosed to us that the Pakistan Army had launched an offensive operation in area Chamb and that the principal elements (11 Cavalry) were in the town's vicinity of Chamb. The helicopters took off, and on landing at Rawalakot, the news remained the same.After having finished their work, a suggestion was made to Brigadier Ishaq, that they may proceed to the area to witness this advance towards Chamb. Brigadier Ishaq, already having been wanting an opportunity to meet his Commander General Akhtar Ali MaliK, readily agreed to this suggestion. Resultantly, we left for Chamb via Bhimber (HQ 4 Sector) to get the latest information on the prevailing overall situation. At Bhimber, the information remained the same. After partaking in a quick lunch, we left and landed in the gun position, in Padhar Nullah. Since we neither had maps nor were familiar with the area, it was found out the general direction of Chamb from the GPO. At this stage, Brigadier Ishaq went back to Murree as he had scheduled a meeting in the evening.

In the other helicopter, Major Awan, Captain Akram, and I took off and proceeded towards the indicated direction. En route, we located an enemy post, which had not been attacked and was on a flank and in considerable depth. When overhead, I asked Major Awan to land so we could pick up a couple of weapons as souvenirs. Major Awan suggested that we involve in the venture on the return journey. Thus we proceeded

1943: The Matriculation Class of Central Model School, Lahore.
Author is 9th from left, first row.



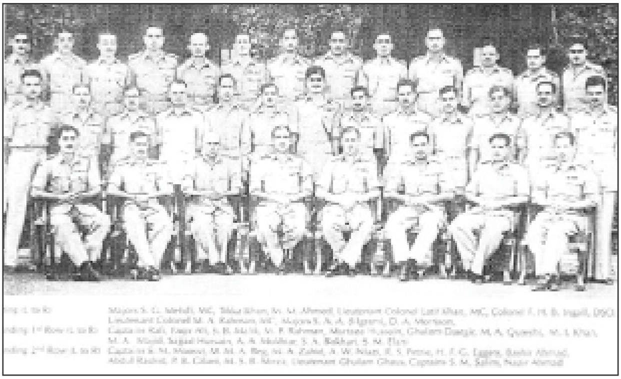
1943: A Blow Up of the Class of Matriculation Central Model School, Lahore.
The author is standing left, Nasim Hassan Shah is sitting in the middle
with Raiz Ahmad on his left.

The Rowing Team of Government College, Lahore, who were the Champions
of Inter Collegiate Tournament. The author is standing 5th from left.

Author is sitting on the left wearing black arm band. GC Aziz is on the left, Kakul.

Colonel (Later Brigadier) F.H.B Ingall

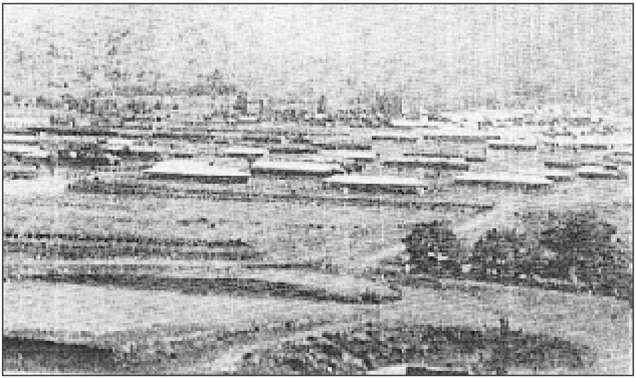
The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan who personally selected Colonel F.H.B Ingall as the founding Commandant of the Academy, Kakul.



The Faculty in April 1948: The Staff at the start of the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul.

No. 5 PLATOON TARIQ COMPANY
1ST QUAID-E-AZAM OWN BATTALION
THE PAKISTAN MILITARY ACADEMY KAKUL

The No. 5 Platoon of Tariq Company, author is standing 6th from the left in first row PMA, Kakul.



The hutment of the Royal Indian Army Service Corps Training School at Kakul in 1940s which formed the nucleus of the Pakistan Military Academy.

A View of the would be PMA Road in 1940, Kakul.

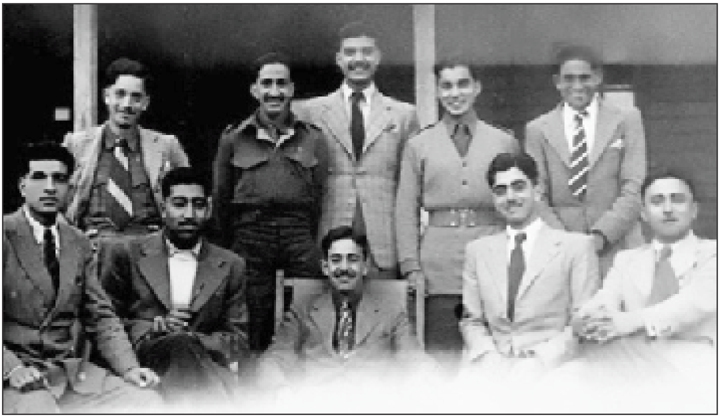
The main entrance gate of PMA, Kakul.

The PMA, Road as to-day, PMA, Kakul.

Google Earth

The aerial view of PMA, Kakul as it looks now, and the parade ground is to the left, Kakul.

The parade ground, with 0ne of the Cadet's Mess in the background, PMA, Kakul.



The members of CPO Club. Author is standing first left. Hamid Noon is in the Centre, Babar Sardar Ahmad and C.M. Anwar standing right and left of him, were not members Rab Nawaz is not in the picture, Kakul

The Face of Quaid-eAzam banner, Kakul.

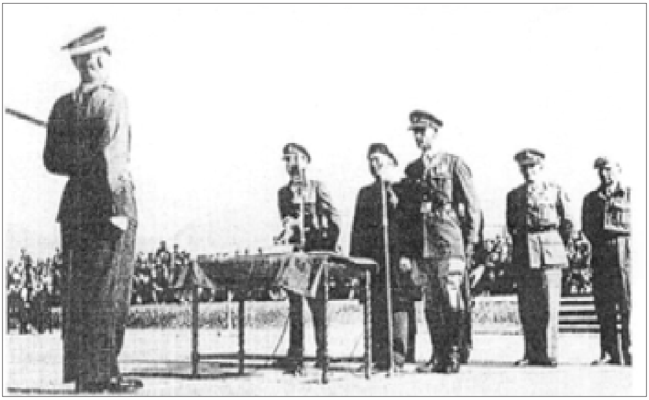
## First Governor General's Parade and The Opening Ceremony November 25, 1948

Governor General Khwaja Nazimuddin moving to inspect the Parade.
The Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Douglas Gracey is also seen in the picture moving beside the Commandant on his left, Kakul.

Governor General Khwaja Nazimuddin reviewing the Parade, followed by the Under Officer and the Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Douglas Gracey, Kakul.

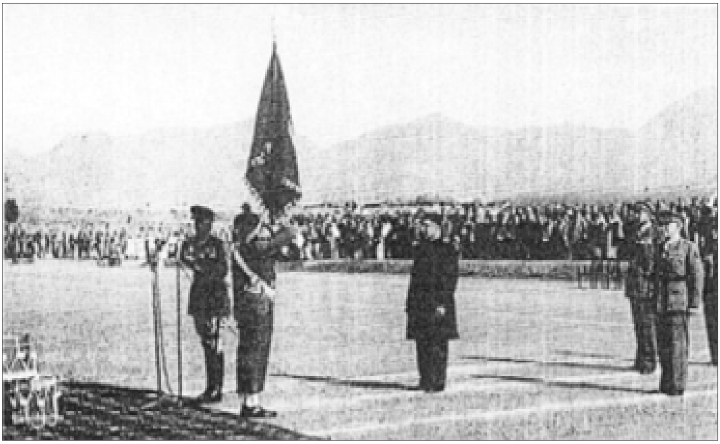
The Madr-e-Millat visiting the Child Welfare Centre, May 23, 1949, accompanied by the Commandant, Kakul.

The Madr-e-Millat visiting our class, she is sitting in the back row, Kakul.



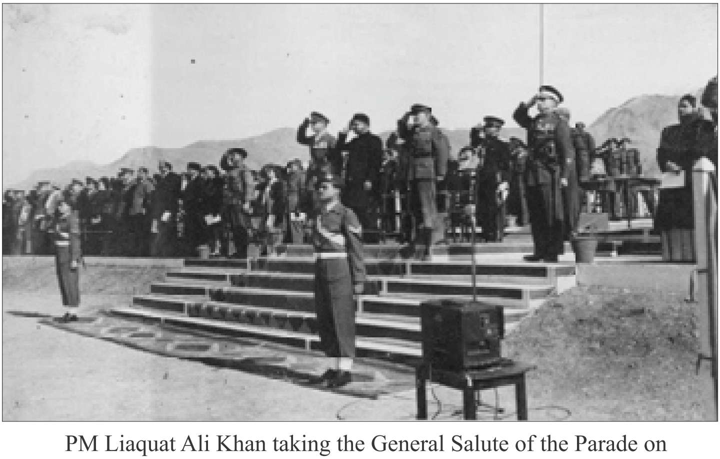
Conferment of the insignia of Member of the British Empire on RSM Duffield. RSM V.C. Duffield of 3rd Battalion, the Coldstream Guards, was personally selected as the Drill Regimental Sergeant major by Brigadier Ingall. He became a legend at Kakul for his high standards of drill discipline and turn out, Kakul.

Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan inspecting the Parade, Kakul.



Colours Celebration Ceremony, Kakul.

1st PMA Long Course Graduation on 4th February, 1950,
author is standing 3rd left in 3rd row, Kakul.



PM Liaquat Ali Khan taking the General Salute of the Parade on
his arrival, Kakul.

We started our flying on Auster Aircraft. No 1 Air O.P. Flight RPAF, inherited five aircraft on partition. A view of the aircraft while landing at a small strip, near our base, Chaklala.

The start of life in 12 Medium Regiment, Peshawar.

The Artillery Officers of 1st PMA Long Course, author is sitting 4th from left, Nowshera.

The author is 2nd from left, along with a group of friends. Lieutenant Colonel Gus Peyers exchanged his Cap with me out of affection and friendship. Fort Rucker, Alabama, USA.

The author is 1st from left, along with our instructor Wally Martin and some other students. Fort Rucker, Alabama, USA.

U.S. ARMY AVIATION CENTER

Attending a Flying Course at Fort Rucker, Alabama, USA. The author is sitting 7th from right.

Commandant Brig Bilgrami right with Maj Gen Tikka Khan 2nd right. The author is 4th from right, Quetta.

The author is 3rd right, Staff College, Quetta.

The author is 1st left, receiving Tennis Championship Trophy from Begum Bilgrammi, Quetta.

The author with wife, Omera Mahmud, at fancy dress dinner party,
Staff College, Quetta.

The Occasion of the Celebrations at Persipolis, where the tents of Yahya khan and Podgorny were pitched opposite to each other.

General Ayub Khan visiting Chamb Sector after Cease Fire.

General Yahya Khan giving Wings Army Flying brevets to pilots, author is first right, Dhamial

Presentations of Army Flying Brevets to pilots, author is 2nd right, Dhamial.

Prime Minister Mr Bhutto addressing the ceremony of Brevet Presentations to Graduating Pilot's, the author is standing second left on the dais, Dhamial, Punjab.

Prime Minister Mr. Bhutto arrived at Dhamial Army Aviation Base, author is on the left, Dhamial.

Prime Minister Mr Bhutto in conversation with author and General Tikka Khan, Dhamial.

Prime Minister Mr Bhutto watching the Flying Demonstration. Author is sitting 3rd from the right, Dhamial., ,

The Prime Minister in Group Photograph of Staff and Students of Army Aviation School.The author is sitting 5th from the right, Dhamial

The author is presenting the Sheild to The Prime Minister, Dhamial

Outside a mosque at St. Petersburg, author is in the Centre.

further, but could not locate a suitable HQ or a Command vehicle, and in consequence, Major Awan suggested that we return as it was getting late in the afternoon.

As we turned back, we learnt on the ARC-44 that Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Hamid Khan had been ambushed. We asked them to relay any information of the position so we could fly there and retrieve Brigadier Hamid. While we were engaged in this conversation, we again arrived at the same enemy position, and I asked Major Awan to land. He mentioned something about there being people in the post, but being preoccupied with the ARC-44, I did not understand the implications. As the helicopter touched down, I jumped out, and with the only weapon I had (the flying cap akin to the current golf cap), asked the men to stand up. It was then that we realised that we were amid a significant number of enemy soldiers (later it transpired that it was a company post of 5th Sikh Light Infantry and as customary in the Indian Battalions; they had Mortars, Recoilless Rifles, and Light Machine Gun elements from a Rajput Battalion.

Still influenced by the desire for war souvenirs, I asked Major Awan to land near the main bunker, while I got a couple of weapons from the check post and then we would take off in the helicopter. Major Awan, to his credit, convinced me that there might be a minefield around the post so I called out to a Sikh soldier to come over and on my finding out, he confirmed that there were mines along the barbed wire. I asked him to lead the way into the post. As I walked in, Awan brought over the helicopter and landed near the central bunker. On inquiry, I was informed that they had been subjected to some shelling and there were a few wounded lying inside. I moved into the bunker, and after assessment of the bodies, I found that there were a couple dead and another couple who had been injured. The Company Commander, Major Negi had left the post on the plea he was proceeding to fetch some rations, and in his absence, a subedar was in charge of the post. On emerging from the bunker, I saw two enemy aircraft approaching from the South, possibly having seen the helicopter. I immediately rushed towards the chopper and indicated to Major Awan about the potential of an impending air attack. The Indian aircraft made a pass over but did not open fire, then turned around to make the next pass as to attack the helicopter/position. Our helicopter had in the meantime taken off. I ordered the men to go to the ground as the planes were approaching again. However, before they could attack the post, they were hit by one F-86 Sabre and crashed ahead of the position.

I directed the men to place their rifles on the parapet and move out.

After having moved them out, I asked the Senior JCO to sort them into ranks. Realising that the primary aim i.e. getting souvenirs had been overlooked, I asked one of the OR's, to go into the position and fetch two rifles (brand new G-IIIs). Noting that the Rajputs (Heavy Weapons Troops) seemed a little sullen and may react adversely, they were at the head of the column, and the march towards the lines of Pakistan was started. After about three miles, I met (Late) Major (Later Major General) Abdullah Saeed, who was moving forward with his battalion. I requested that he take over the prisoners, but he refused, showing that his troops were moving forward towards Chamb. This march continued, and at dusk, we arrived at the Moel post (total distance about 7 miles). Here we stopped for tea, and anxious about the helicopter, I made inquiries and was informed that it had safely reached Kharian. After tea, the march started again towards Padhar (The location of Brigade Headquarters) about 3-4 miles away. It was dark, but the full moon made movement possible. At about 2000 hrs we reached the Brigade HQ at Padhar (now taken over by the HQ Corps Arty). I left the prisoners in the volleyball ground as we proceeded to the Officer's Mess, where I met the (now late) Brigadier Amjad Chaudhary and his staff, and informed them about the men. They were in great disbelief, and they came over to see the Indian troops (around 75-78) sitting on the ground. I once again made a request for vehicles to move the prisoners to Bhimber, but it was turned down because the Corps Arty was being redeployed and consequently no vehicles were available. However, I was informed that some bridging equipment had been moved to Tawi and on its return, vehicles would be available.

At around 2 AM the vehicles arrived, and I directed the men to show me their battalion embussing drill, and they complied with efficiency. At around 4 AM we reached the Sector HQ at Bhimber where I handed over the men and went off to sleep. At around 10 AM the next day, a helicopter arrived and brought me back to Dhamial where (now late) Colonel (Later Lieutenant General) A.B. Awan received us and counselled me against my recklessness. I presented one rifle that I had taken to the Army Aviation Mess and kept the other for myself. The OR's when interrogated by the Intelligence narrated the events.

Later that evening at the President's Press Conference, the Director General of the ISI Brigadier Riaz brought the event to President's attention, suggesting that this news be released to the Press which could also help raise the morale amongst the troops. Since I had contacted no one in person; different reports of the incident were published in the

Press, some showing that it was a PAF helicopter.

Subsequently, in recognition of this act, I was awarded the Sitara-eJurat. It later transpired that the position was a Company post (PAUR) and as nature works in its mysterious way, I was given another award of Sitara-e-Juraat (within 100 yards of the area) in the 1971 war. At that time I was commanding 111 Brigade."

When I learned about this episode, I was bemused. But later, when I met Bob, my spontaneous remarks were, "It was initially an act of stupidity, but it eventually turned out to be one of great personal bravery and gallantry."

As these first excitements were dying out, 11 Cavalry had reached Chamb. The accounts are rather conflicting, but between 1100- 1200 hrs they had reached the outskirts of Chamb. The enemy RR's, which had been sighted in the Chamb area, had knocked out a few of our tanks. The time at which Chamb was captured is still unclear, but the area West of River Tawi was seized by the evening, and the operation for the construction of a bridgehead across Tawi had started. By first light, on the 2nd of September, some units were struggling to make a foothold across the Eastern Bank of River Tawi. There was a lot of confusion because of a few vehicles getting bogged down in the soft bed of River Tawi. There was no enemy resistance, but the bridgehead had not yet been completed.

On the morning of the 2nd of September, COC 7 Division was flown from his HQ at Jalalpur to Bhojpur, which was the location of the Tactical HQ of 102 Brigade. There, we got the instructions to proceed to Kharian, pick up General Musa who was arriving from Rawalpindi and bring him to the present location. We left for Kharian with two helicopters. General Musa, accompanied by Brigadier A.A. Bilgrami (VCGS), arrived in a U-8F, flown by Major Kureshy and. Major Madni. From Kharian, General Musa and Brigadier A.A. Bilgrami were flown in helicopters to the HQ 102 Brigade, where the GOC 7 Division had been dropped earlier. On arrival there, General Musa tried to contact General Akhtar Ali Malik, GOC 12 Division, but he was not in communication with anyone, neither on the wireless or landline. After a lot of effort, he finally was traced in Chamb, where he was busy facilitating the redeployment of the guns of 4 Corps Artillery. There was an urgent need for firepower for the advance beyond the Tawi River. After a lot of effort, a message was finally conveyed to GOC 12 Division through the Headquarters 4 Corps Artillery, asking him to come to HQ 102 Brigade. Very reluctantly he arrived and was ushered in to meet General Musa, General Yahya and

Brigadier Bilgrami.

In the bunker, a discussion took place which was inaudible for those of us standing outside. After some time Major General Akhtar Ali Malik came out with a gloomy expression on his face and some tears down his face. He later told us that although he wanted to remain in charge of the operation here, he had been ordered to take over the command of 12 Division at Murree. He looked dejected and broken hearted, as he had conceived and planned the operation from the start; it had meant a lot to him.

It was a fateful decision. Was it with any specific intent? Was it to glorify Major General Yahya Khan, who was already being groomed as the next Commander-in- Chief? Was General Ayub under specific instructions from his masters not to push so far as to result in the inevitable capture of Akhnur? Could it possibly be that if Major General Malik had captured Akhnur, he would have become a national hero? Did this cause any alarm to General Ayub? They all defy answers, as no one has ever explained the reasons for it. However, the fact is that it caused a delay in the battle’s progress and the capture of the ultimate objective of Akhnur. In my estimation it was definitely possible, as General Akhtar Malik had revealed all his intents and purposes in his orders, followed it up in the execution of his plan and the posture of his aggressiveness in command; they all portend to that. He planned to capture Akhnur on D+3 Day. However, the significance of this delay is a moot point; there is no way to determine this. It is only a guessing game, and the entire episode can only be described as our misfortune.

General Yahya took some time to assess the situation and held his “O” Group conference on the afternoon of the 2nd of September. The orders for establishment of Bridge Head, as planned earlier and under execution, were further elaborated by GOC 7 Division. He gave orders to both 102 Brigade and 10 Brigade to continue on the offensive on September 3, 1965. Brigadier Zafar was tasked to attack the Troti and Jaurian Positions from the north, and Brigadier Azmat was ordered to attack from the south. By 19.15 Hrs on the 2nd of September, the bridgehead was established by 102 Brigade, with 6 FF and 13 Lancers in the South and by 4 AK Brigade in the North. 6 Brigade under the command of Brigadier Iftikhar Janjua had also arrived in the area. He was ordered to take over the bridgehead to relieve 102 Brigade for their further action at Troti and Jaurian Positions. The situation as it obtained on the afternoon of the 2nd of September is at Annexure-3[6].

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[6] Annexure-3 is given in Annexures

In the orders given earlier, GOC 7 Division had tasked 10 Brigade and 102 Brigade to secure Troti-Jaurian positions by last light on the 3rd of September. The outline plan of Commanders 10 Brigade and 102 Brigade were as follows: - 6 FF (Northern Battalion) to breakout from area of Pallanwala at first light on the 3rd of September and advance along line Chamb-Akhnur. Initially, mask Kalit and advance up to nullah/ road June (7367) and sweep southwards to secure Jaurian.

14 Punjab (Southern Battalion) supported by one Squadron 13 Lancers to break out at first Light on the 3rd of September. Initially, secure Nawan Hamirpur and after that advance eastwards along the river to threaten the enemy left flank to facilitate securing of Jaurian. 13 Punjab in reserve.

To support this operation, elaborate artillery support had been planned. Enemy positions at Thoti and Jaurian were to be softened by heavy artillery fire, before the attack by 10 Brigade and 102 Brigade on first light on the 3rd of September.

In the North, 6 FF and 13 Lancers met increasing resistance from enemy armour, Recoilless Rifles and Infantry, but advanced beyond Pallanwala. The opposition stiffened as our troops approached Troti. The enemy had flooded the paddy fields, which made the movement off the roads difficult for both A and B Echelon vehicles. But despite the odds, 13 Lancers Group had contacted enemy positions at Troti by 0600 Hrs on September 3, 1965.

In the South, 14 Punjab Group met little opposition from Nawan Hamirpur. The progress was also slow because of the flooded fields, which subsequently separated infantry from Fighting Echelon vehicles. They did not go far enough beyond Nawan Hamirpur. The Brigade Commander 10 Brigade, Brigadier Azmat, showed a complete lack of willpower, proving to be inept at shouldering the responsibilities of command. He hardly exercised any control, lacked initiative and acted as a silent bystander to the ongoing operations, allowing operations to drift along, taking their own course.

At first light on the 3rd of September, along with GOC 7 Division, I flew in an H x 13 helicopter from his HQ at Jalalpur to Chamb. At the helipad, Commander 4 Corps Artillery, Brigadier Amjad Ali Chaudhary met GOC 7 Division. When the GOC inquired about the progress of the attack, Commander 4 Corps Artillery explained that the fire plan had been executed on time and that the main attack was scheduled for first light. But according to his information, there was no movement on the ground.

When GOC 7 Division inquiringly looked at me, I told him that I would go and carry out a detailed recce. Flying in the H x 13 helicopter, Captain Askree and I flew across Tawi to the Troti position. As we approached the area, we found the whole position of Troti and Jaurian completely enveloped by a cloud of smoke and dust caused by the heavy artillery fire. The sheer weight coupled with the explosive impact of over 100 artillery guns had taken its toll with devastating consequences. Suddenly, we saw a break in the smoke covered positions of the enemy. I asked Captain Askree to land the helicopter while I kept watch over the area. As we got closer to the ground, the smoke cleared, showing the actual effects of the artillery fire. Most of the surrounding area was in flames. Though we stayed on the field for a relatively short time, the situation had become clear to us; the enemy holding those positions was in a state of panic. Having had the benefit of seeing with our own eyes the situation as it appeared on the ground, we took off and flew back. We first landed near Troti and met 2 I/C, 6 FF. On inquiring, Major (Later Brigadier) Anwar-ul-Haq told me that their F echelons had not arrived and because of that, they could not attack Troti as planned. From there I flew southwards, where we first met Lieutenant Colonel Ata, CO 8 Medium Regiment and with his guidance, located Commander 10 Brigade, Brigadier Azmat. When I asked the Brigadier about the progress on the ground, he explained that 14 Punjab was ordered to advance along River Chenab, but they had lost contact with HQ, and because of this he was now in no position to push any further. We then flew toward the 13 Lancers, where I met Lieutenant Colonel Sher, their Commanding Officer. The unit's tanks were all lined up in a nullah. The CO 13 Lancers explained that there was heavy enemy fire coming from Troti position, which was hindering their assault. After concluding this meeting, I headed northwards and met Lieutenant Colonel Siddique, CO 8 Baluch, and Brigadier Zafar Ali Khan, who was in Command of 102 Brigade. They too told me that because of enemy resistance and the rough terrain continuing with their advance had become increasingly difficult. I gave all the Brigade and unit commanders that I met, a detailed report and my assessment of the enemy positions in the area of Troti and Jaurian. I put particular emphasis on the effect of our artillery fire and tried my best to influence their minds by stressing the need to resume with our advance. They were being advised to bypass the Troti and Jaurian positions by using both the right and left flanks, but there was no reaction from them. Seeing this stalemate on the ground, I flew back to Chamb, where the GOC 7 Division and Commander 4 Corps Artillery were anxiously waiting for me. I repeated what I had told Lieutenant Colonel Siddique, Brigadier Zafar, Brigadier

Azmat and all others, of my assessment of the situation. In my opinion, the enemy had been stupefied by the explosive impact as a result of the artillery fire. I felt that from these positions, the enemy could not offer much resistance and suggested that we should act without delay and launch the offensive. I also told GOC 7 Division that I had tried my best to influence the minds of all the field commanders in the area of operations, but since I had seen no reaction from them, I firmly felt that only he could influence the situation. Major General Yahya had a sharp mind and grasped the critical points of my briefing. He had clearly understood the situation, and he spontaneously decided to act. He immediately flew out in the chopper with me to meet the Brigade Commanders. After taking off from the helipad, we facilitated GOC the opportunity to get a clearer and broader aerial view of the ground: enemy dispositions, the location of own troops and the big gap between Jaurian and River Chenab on the right and Jaurian and Kali Dhar feature on the left. Very quickly, the GOC sized up the situation and agreed wholeheartedly with my earlier assessment. The helicopter first landed near the Tactical Headquarter of 10 Brigade. The GOC was very upset and annoyed with the slow pace of the advance and his tone was rather harsh. In fact, he used most abusive and foul language. He told the Brigade Commander to go in the helicopter with me and take an aerial view of the area. He also instructed me to show him the enormous gap between Jaurian position and River Chenab. He also ordered that 10 Brigade should bypass Jaurian, and after having outflanked the enemy position there, they should proceed along the road Jaurian-Akhnur. He further emphasised that any pockets of resistance at Troti and Jaurian would have to be mopped up later. GOC 7 Division was then flown to the position of 13 Lancers and 102 Brigade. CO 13 Lancers, while explaining the situation on the ground informed Major General Yahya, that the enemy fire from the Troti position was preventing further advance. Admonishingly, he told Lieutenant Colonel Sher, "The enemy will not be throwing rose petals at you," and ordered him to continue the advance.

His orders were clear and precise; 102 Brigade, along with 13 Lancers less one squadron, were to bypass Jaurian position from the left flank. The advance did not proceed at the pace that it was envisaged, but a useful outflanking manoeuvre was developed.

It was at this stage that we received new orders; 102 Brigade with 13 Lancers were to capture Pahari Wala (6363) and begin advance through the gap in the enemy positions at Troti and the hills to its North.

In the South, 10 Brigade was ordered to bypass enemy in area Jaurian and clear the Sahibwala Khad line without delay. 102 Brigade in the North and 10 Brigade in the South were instructed to secure the Kangar Nala line as soon as possible and then to advance and capture the Garah-Fatwal line Pt 968(8063). The orders were precise, but the terrain and flooded rice fields and the leadership's lack of intent made progress slow and gruelling.

The earlier plan to capture of Jaurian by 102 Brigade and 10 Brigade, by last light on the 3rd of September, could not be accomplished because of a lack of intelligence on the enemy's strength and exact dispositions. The rough and broken hilly terrain, the flooded paddy fields also played a part in this, but above all, the complete lack of will on the part of the two Brigade Commanders was the primary factor.

Since a stalemate had ensued at Troti, explicit instructions were issued by the GOC to bypass the enemy positions there and to carry out an outflanking move. While the 102 Brigade was developing the flanking movement from the north and 10 Brigade from the south, Army Aviation remained actively involved with the operations. At this stage, heavy gunfire was successfully holding back the advance of own troops. G-II (Ops) 4 Corps Artillery, Major (Later Colonel)Aleem Afridi ordered the pilot, Captain Khalid Saeed, who was providing close support to these operations, to silence these guns. As Captain Saeed gave the grid reference and started adjustment of artillery fire at those positions, GII Corps Artillery, Major (Later Colonel) Aleem Afridi became very perturbed. He did not believe that the grid reference that Captain Saeed had just given was correct. He was strongly telling him that own troops had gone beyond that line. Captain Saeed told him that since he was creating a doubt in his mind, he will fly over the position to confirm and clear the situation. That was his daring! As he flew overhead the enemy gun position, small arms and automatic weapons opened up, and the aircraft was riddled with bullets. The right fuel tank was critically hit and ruptured, sending gushing fuel into the cockpit of the plane. Captain Saeed, maintaining his calmness, said to Major Aleem,

"Now there is no doubt in my mind. This is the position of the enemy guns, which is withholding the advance of own troops. Now concentrate all the guns here and bring down maximum fire." Captain Khalid Saeed was lucky that he landed safely and the aircraft did not catch fire. The intensive and accurate concentration of own guns on this position had its telling effect. Because of this intensive fire and also the outflanking moves of 102 Brigade and the 10 Brigade, the enemy abandoned these positions. These were around near area Kalit. They left behind 24 guns;

eight of them were still hooked behind their towers with their engines running, and the remaining sixteen remained still deployed in their original positions. The enemy also left behind a full squadron of AMX tanks, a lot of other equipment, vehicles and ammunition. Later, Major General Tikka Khan, along with Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Nur Hussain, went into the area and collected all the booty.

For this brave act of Captain Khalid Saeed, I initiated a recommendation for him for the award SJ, which he did not get but was instead conferred with the award of Imtiazi Sanad. This deed by Captain Khalid Saeed, however, did Army Aviation proud. The events on the 4th of September turned out to be very significant in the operations of Jaurian. This position was very strongly held by the enemy; it was roughly composed of 2 Battalions, a Regiment less one squadron of AMX tanks and supported by a field regiment in the Area of Kalit and additional medium guns deployed behind that position.

The outflanking moves by 10 Brigade from the right flank and 102 Brigade from the left, besides the direct attack at Troti and Jaurian, had unnerved the enemy. Its position at Troti and Jaurian cracked, and they had abandoned these posts and retreated. The initial artillery fire had a devastating effect on the enemy positions. By evening on the 4th of September, the enemy had almost entirely withdrawn from Troti and Jaurian, and by the subsequent morning, the Troti and Jaurian positions had been captured, and our troops were advancing on to Akhnur. Annexure 4[7]. Army Aviation had played a central role in the development of the outflanking move. First, through a detailed, intensive and accurate assessment of the battlefield situation; Army Aviation had done battlefield surveillance, gathering much needed vital information. By flying the GOC 7 Division into the area and giving him a professional briefing along with the aerial view of the battlefield, the fog of war was cleared rapidly. The information collected when the helicopter had been landed in the midst of the enemy positions at Jaurian was most eminent in this; it helped determine enemy dispositions in that area, and in identifying significant gaps in their defences on both their right and left flanks. Army Aviation had also come up with a tactical plan which entailed attacking from the flanks and not from the front. The stalemate that had ensued at Troti and Jaurian had brought about a somewhat breakdown of command and control of the formations. The F Echelons of some units was lost, the Brigade Commanders had lost contact with some of their units, and the momentum of attack at Troti and Jaurian had not fully developed. It was largely through the efforts of Army Aviation, by their timely information and advice, that this stalemate was broken.

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[7] Annexure-4 is given in Annexures

In separate orders 4 AK Brigade Commander Brigadier Hameed was given the task of capturing the Kalidhar feature on the left side of the route leading to Akhnur. It was to commence on first light on the 4th of September. Wireless messages kept pouring in about the progress being made. It was towards midday that the Brigade Commander personally gave the message of having captured the top of the Kalidhar feature. He was profusely congratulated by Major General Yahya Khan, who had already been in a state of euphoria after having received reports of the progress being made. However, this was short-lived. A little later, a call was made about the heavy enemy counter attack on the positions recently captured on the main feature. Sometimes later the news was sent that in the face of heavy Indian Attack, the top of the feature had been evacuated and our own troops were now occupying lower slopes on the ridge. Then again there came the news of another enemy attack at those positions now supposedly held by own troops, and the story of having to abandon this was repeated. Alarmingly, further messages kept coming in of our own troops retreating. Towards the evening, 4 AK Brigade troops seemed to have returned to the same point from where they had launched their attack in the early morning. At this stage, Major General Yahya Khan got into an uncontrollable rage. He was on the wireless himself, shouting at Brigadier Hameed, “You (expletive)! It is now clear that you have been painting pictures to me the entire day. You never moved out of your location. The entire operation was based on a farcical description!” Why he did not remove him from his command, I could not personally understand? But the most ironic thing was that when General Yahya Khan assumed the Command of the Army, he promoted him as Major General and then later as Lieutenant General. I was totally disillusioned!

Soon after Jaurian position was captured/bypassed on the morning of the 5th of September, the advance to Akhnur proceeded. 10 and 102 Brigade spearheaded the advance. In the South, 13 Punjab (10 Brigade) made a swift movement along the northern bank of River Chenab and cut the road Jaurian-Akhnur in the area of Dalpat (10 Brigade objective) by 0915 hrs. The advance of 6 FF and 13 L on Fatwal was held up by enemy rearguards, which were rounded up by 14 Punjab from the South. The Mawawali Khad line was reached on the evening of the 5th of September. It was estimated that the enemy which had fallen back from Chamb, Troti and Jaurian positions, would have taken posts in the foothills of Akhnur. It was also estimated that at Akhnur, we would be up against the key defensive position. Under this misconception, the infantry advancing to Akhnur failed to carry out any aggressive patrolling. The Army Aviation was also handicapped since it was getting dark, and perception was very limited. The position of the enemy defences at Akhnur was unclear and this lack of information proved to one of the most vital factors contributing to the result of the 1965 war. The Fatwal ridge positions held by the enemy had been overcome and we had advanced beyond that; we even reached within 2-3 miles of Akhnur Bridge at River Chenab. -Annexure 5[8]. The fundamental principle of war (aggressively following the retreating enemy) was ignored and not followed. The forward elements failed to carry out any patrolling. Major General Yahya Khan was not forward enough to personally influence and push them to move on. It is the irony of fate again that Commander 10 Brigade Brigadier Azmat was in the lead. True to his performance as on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd of September, he failed to aggressively pursue an advance towards the bridge at Akhnur. This also brings out some difference in the aspect of Command between the two force commanders in this sector. Earlier, General Akhtar Malik was right on the tails of the leading Brigade Commanders and also milling around in the gun positions to personally oversee the operations; control and guide it. But General Yahya, to the contrary, was exercising his leadership through the routine channels and customary chains of command.

Akhnur had been our primary objective, and its capture was a pivotal part of this operation. Having reached within 2-3 Miles from the Akhnur Bridge and the glimmering lights of Akhnur well within our sights, why was there no urgency to probe, move forward and capture this crucial target? All of us who were in the field and other defence critics and analysts kept asking this question up to this day.

The retreating enemy had not picked up the courage to take positions at Akhnur. In fact, they withdrew across the bridge at River Chenab. Akhnur Bridge was abandoned and left empty on the night of 5/6 Sept, almost as if it was beckoning us to move in and capture. It is unfortunate that we failed to achieve this important objective. The enemy, realising this, reoccupied Akhnur positions on the morning of September 6. General Yahya confessed that it was the biggest mistake that he had made in this war.

Here, I will reflect again on the remarks I made earlier regarding the change of command. Was there a motive or a purpose in it or that it was only an honest mistake?

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[8] Annexure-5 is given in Annexures

A United Nations Military observer, who was posted on the Indian side of the Line of Control, came over to Jaurian area after the Cease Fire and bluntly asked the reason we weren't able to capture Akhnur Bridge. Many Pakistani Officers who had been attending various courses abroad had been asked this question from their Indian counterparts on those courses. They were told that they could not understand what prevented the Pakistan Army from capturing the Akhnur Bridge. There was no ready answer available then and even now in hindsight. Situation at cease fire -Annexure-6[9].

This anomaly can only partially be answered by a letter which Major General Akhtar Malik later wrote to his brother from Ankara. Annexure-7[10]. It helps throw some light to his frustrations and motivations regarding the whole incident before the advance towards Akhnur and the ultimate objective of capturing the Akhnur bridge. It suggests that the change of command, which he describes as de facto, had already taken place at the very first day of the operations after the fall of Chamb. He subscribes this to the fact that Brigadier Azmat Hayat Khan, Brigade Commander of 10 Brigade, had broken off all wireless communications with him. He further elaborates that when he tore into him the next day, Brigadier Azmat sheepishly informed him he was Yahya's Brigadier, and answers to him only. I am personally not inclined to agree with this assessment and analysis. I was privy to these events and was in close touch with Major General Yahya Khan, and I believe no such instructions were given to Brigadier Azmat Hayat. The conduct of Brigadier Azmat speaks volumes by itself; not only did he remain out of communication with the GOC of 12 Division on September 1,1965, but he repeated the same practice with the GOC of 7 Division later. In my presence, Major General Yahya, on September 3,1965, rebuked him for his actions. That he had begged Generals Musa and Yahya to allow him to join the advance up to Akhnur, even under the command of Major General Yahya, is most probably true.

At first light on the 6th of September, as per the routine of the last few days I was going to the mess to have my breakfast. GOC 7 Division came rushing out of his caravan. On seeing me, General Yahya said that General Musa was on the line a short while ago and had told him that the Indians had attacked Pakistan across the International line. The attack had come at the Jassar Bridge, Lahore and the Kasur Sector. He was also informed that the Jassar Bridge had been captured. While conveying this news to me, GOC did not believe that the Jassar Bridge could have fallen and captured so easily by the enemy. On my inquiry as to why he did not believe in this, GOC 7 Division remarked that this position is being held very strongly and firmly. Since this doubt was created, I suggested that he let me fly over the area to see the situation on the ground, to which he agreed. When I flew over the Jassar Bridge, I saw the fighting taking place across the Bridge; beyond our enclave on the Indian side of the Bridge. I flew over the whole of the position of 115 Brigade, and this close aerial view gave me a very reassuring picture. The Bridge was intact and in firm control of own 115 Brigade. From here, I went straight to the 15 Division HQ, where nobody was sure regarding the situation at Jassar Bridge. The GOC, Brigadier Ismail, whose only claim to Command was that he, like General Musa, was Persian speaking, appeared to be a passenger only. Colonel S.G. Mehdi, who was my Company Commander at PMA, had seemed to be in charge. When I informed them both that I had just flown over this position, there was a look of anxiousness on their faces. On being told, that the Bridge was intact and that the fighting was taking place across the Bridge in the area of our own enclave with the 115 Brigade positions firmly intact, there was a sudden rush of liveliness. Colonel S.G.Mehdi picked up the phone and called the DMO at GHQ. He told him that he had disobeyed the orders of HQ 1 Corps for the blowing up of the Bridge at Jassar. He further said that he might be Court Martialled, but he had willfully disobeyed these orders. He was vehemently pleading with the DMO, that the HQ 1 Corps had under some misinformed judgment, given these orders. Colonel Mehdi now appeared more composed, relaxed and in command. I had known him, and I hoped that with his background, he could grapple with the situation and bring in some sanity and some sense of direction at the Division Headquarters. It was immediately clear that there was a total lack of proper communications and understandings between Corps HQ and the Divisional HQ.

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[9] Annexure-6 is given in Annexures

[10] Annexure-7 is given in Annexures

On hearing the news of Jassar, the telephonic conversation with the DMO and the reassuring discussions of the overall situation, there was finally some normalcy in the atmosphere of the Divisional HQ. Colonel Mehdi told me that on the 5th of September, an enemy dispatch rider had been captured, and in the mail that had been gained from the rider were some letters that were addressed to the personnel of 1 Armoured Division. From these letters, it was clear that the enemy Armoured Division was now in this area. Colonel Staff gave these important letters and documents to support this to me and asked me to take these out to GHQ. This was done promptly, and GHQ had this information on September 6. Colonel Mehdi further told me I should reassure Major General Yahya that his old formation will not let him down.

I flew back to Tactical HQ 7 Division at Chak Pandit where GOC 7 Division was waiting very anxiously for me to hear the latest news about the situation in the Sialkot Sector, in particular, reference to the position at the Jassar Bridge! When he was informed that his appreciation of our own strength at Jassar was correct and that the bridge was intact, he very excitedly exclaimed, “Did I not tell you that?” He further said that he as GOC 15 Division, had planned the entire defence of the area; he had walked the whole area on foot and had planned the defence of the area to the minutest details. Emphatically, he explained, “The logical line of the enemy attack will be Charwa-Chobara-Phillarauh-Chawinda.” The mention of the names of these places did not ring any bell in my ears, at least not at that time. But the words seemed to be prophetic on September 8, 1965. The significance of this only dawned on me in the coming days as the events unfolded themselves. When I transmitted the details of my discussions at 15 Division HQ and particularly the message that Colonel Mehdi had sent to him, he just scoffed it away. Apparently, Colonel Mehdi, for what reasons I do not know, had fallen in his eyes and estimation.

# CHAPTER 9

# SIALKOT SECTOR

After the Indian attack across the International Boundary, the Sialkot Sector had suddenly assumed the Central Position. There was some confusion about the readiness of our troops and in particular their occupation of their defensive positions, when the Indians launched their attack. This is on account of a surmise that the Foreign Office had given to GHQ, that the Indians will not cross the International Boundaries. It is not true as despite any assurances to this effect, General Musa had given the orders,"To take all defensive measures," and a Flash Signal from Directorate of Military Operations had been sent to all formations. All had acted on that and the only formation which did not take prompt action on it was 10 Division at Lahore. They had taken only half measures. As explained by Brigadier Gul Hassan, they had misinterpreted the Flash Signal. Their troops occupied their defences only on the night of the 5th of September. Even if the defences at Lahore Sector had not been fully occupied and also not in full readiness, an attack by only one Indian Infantry Division against another one Infantry Division of Pakistan, could not have even miraculously achieved that alluring sight of Indian Forces having drinks in Lahore Gymkhana, as was being hoped by General Chaudhry, the Indian C-in-C. Lahore was a big city and fighting in built-up areas can consume many a division to achieve any results. Have we lost sight of the battle of Leningrad in World War II ? It along with attack at Jassar Bridge and Kasur Sector was only part of their diversionary attack.

It was clear for any military planners that for Pakistan, Khem Kharan was the pivotal prize and for India; it was the Sialkot Sector that held the key. The ultimate fate of the war had to be resolved in these two critical sectors. The positions in Sialkot Sector as on 4th September 1965. Annexure-8[11].

On the news of the attack; some adjustments in field formations had to be undertaken immediately. 4 Corps Artillery Group and some other units concentrated for the attack at Chamb, as part of "Operation Grand Slam", had to be immediately relieved from there and rushed back to Sialkot Sector, their original area of responsibility. As a part of that, 1 Army Aviation Squadron less a Flight, was ordered to move to Sialkot and report to 15 Division. The positions from 5-7th September. Annexure- 9[12].

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[11] Annexure-8 - Situation on 4th September 1965 is given in Annexures

The move of 1 Army Aviation Squadron to Sialkot was completed by the evening of September 6, 1965. The Squadron occupied the strip at the Polo Ground on the right side of the Sambrial-Sialkot Road. The flight of Major Rabbani, ex 2 Army Aviation Squadron, which had already come under the operational control of 1 Army Aviation Squadron, since the 1st of September during Chamb-Jaurian operations, had been earlier moved to Adamke Strip on 4th September, in support of 6 Armoured Division. They were specifically assigned to work with 6 Armoured Division, which was located in area Pasrur, as part of 1 Corps reserve.

Deployed across the road at Sialkot strip, where 1 Army Aviation Squadron was based, was 8 Medium Regiment, which too had just been moved back from Chamb area. Having arrived there, we just carried out our liaison with 15 Division and had a peaceful night after all the hectic activities of the fateful day of September 6; foremost being the confusion and chaos of Jassar Bridge.

On the morning of the 7th of September, the Squadron embarked on immediate familiarization of the area. Also HQ 15 Division and HQ 6 Armoured Division were visited. There was no noticeable enemy activity. But on our side, there was still a state of confusion, uncertainty and lack of adequate information even about our troops and their locations. Since the morning of the 6th September, the prevalent conflicting reports coming in from Jassar Bridge had provoked hasty, illinformed, panicky and illogical assessments and decisions. The essential factor was that many contradictory reports kept emanating from HQ 115 Brigade. This was being further compounded by the inept reactions of the Corps Commander, who was based at Gujranwala. The situation of panic and confusion being so created was earlier settled down due to the recce and information provided by me to 15 Division on September 6, 1965. On the morning of the 7th of September, there was again a state of total confusion of yet another colossal proportion. There was again a chain of misreporting, panicky reactions, confused and ill-informed judgements; all resulting in illogical and contradictory decisions. Some reports were received that the enemy had established a foothold on the own bank of River Ravi at Jassar Bridge. Corps Commander personally gave orders for the blowing up of the Bridge and was himself monitoring its implementation. There is also a version that General Ayub also directly phoned Major Irshad Ullah Khan Bazid, officer in charge of demolition party, to blow up the bridge. Ultimately, when the Bridge was blown, two companies were left

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[12] Annexure-9 - Situation from 5-7 September 1965 is given in Annexures

stranded in the enclave across the Bridge, and they had to wade through the River to return to our own bank of the river. There were also three tanks in support, and these had to be abandoned in the river bed as they could not cross it. 115 Brigade was part of 15 Division, and they were also reacting irrationally; haphazard and illogical decisions were being made with no authentic information. It was an outright sardonic act. Since we had arrived in the area on the evening of the 6th of September, we spent the entire next day doing detailed recce and familiarization of the area. When I arrived at the 15 Division HQ in the evening, I was shocked to see the panic and a state of helplessness. This was the worst, and the most compounded state of a self- inflicted chaotic confusion. It was a pandemic situation. 24 Brigade along with 25 Cavalry had been positioned in area Charwa as part of the defensive plan of 15 Division. They were tasked to defend the most likely enemy line of attack in the area. By evening on the 7th of September, 24 Brigade (minus 3 FF) and 25 Cavalry had been ordered to move to the area Jassar Bridge for any possible counter-attack. This was done on some panicky, irrational, illogical and ill-founded reactions of the Brigade Commander, Brigadier Muzaffar-ud-Din. He was making some false reporting of even if the bridge had been captured by the enemy. This illusionary and imaginative threat had been blown out of all proportions throughout the day. It is a pity that no one contacted us to get the facts verified about the situation as it obtained on the ground. Earlier in the day Colonel Mehdi had sent Captain Hidayat Ullah Khan Niazi for a general surveillance along the International Border and to particularly observe for any unusual movements or concentrations of enemy troops in the area. He found no such activity and reported to Division Headquarters accordingly. No concern or apprehensions were shown for any likely threats at positions held at Jassar Bridge, and no mission was ordered in that area. In consequence, the most sensitive corridor of Maharajke-Charwa – Chobara-Chawinda had been denuded of troops. This vital sector and the line of most likely direction of the enemy attack had been left with only one Battalion i.e. 3 FF (less a company) and a Company of 2 Punjab to defend the entire front and thus made it most vulnerable. When I reached the Headquarters 15 Division in the evening, the absurdity of their panicky reactions and the glaring blunder of sending 24 Brigade Group to the area of Narowal for a possible counter-attack in the area had dawned on them. Some patchy information was coming from the fact that the enemy is preparing to launch his major attack along the axis as appreciated all along. That the assault at Jassar Bridge was only a diversionary attack was the harsh reality which now was staring into the eyes and faces of all present there. The confusion, uncertainty and even the helplessness of the situation were all telling on their minds. They were expressing their anxieties, misgivings and forebodings in muted tones and very subdued state of minds. To make matters more confounded, GOC Brigadier Ismail had rushed to the area of Narowal himself, to give further orders to the troops already dispatched and perhaps still on the move, for the counterattack at Jassar Bridge. It was nearly at midnight on the 7th of September that the full reality was thoroughly hammered into all those confused and panicky minds; when the loud and the deafening sounds of the enemy guns started reverberating the area and the distance skies towards the International Border were lit up by their flashes. This could be heard and seen all the way from Sialkot to Jassar Bridge. GOC 15 Division was at Narowal at that time and was about to enjoy his meal served on a table with proper linen and shining silver cutlery laid out. Brigadier Muzaffar, 115 Brigade Commander, Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik, Commander 24 Brigade and Lieutenant Colonel (late Brigadier) Nisar Ahmad, CO 25 Cavalry, were all sitting on the table along with him. They sat there all composed and oblivious of the whole day's stupid and imbecile decisions and acts on the part of Commander 115 Brigade and GOC 15 Division. The sound of the guns and the sight of their lightening, rather than his own appreciation of the battlefield situation, had suddenly and abruptly delivered the message to the GOC. The futile moves of 24 Brigade Group and 6 Armoured Division are shown as at- Annexure-10[13].

It had suddenly become clear to them that the enemy had launched its attack from the expected direction of Maharajke, Charwa and Chobara. GOC 15 Division abruptly sat in his jeep and left for Sialkot. He just generally and vaguely told the Commander 24 Brigade to do something.1 Army Aviation Squadron was operating in support of 15 Division; no one ever briefed them to verify these reports which had created all the confusion and panic. The Army Aviation had been used for some other missions, but they were not used where the decisions had to be made. Army Aviation too remained ignorant of all news regarding Jassar Bridge as they had been busy familiarising themselves with the corridor area from Sialkot–River Ravi, with a definite eye towards the areas of Maharajke, Charwa, Chobara, as this was a likely line of the Indian attack. The crisis peaked with the destruction of Jassar Bridge and got further compounded when 24 Brigade Group was pulled out of their defensive positions in the most sensitive corridor, for a possible counterattack at Jassar Bridge.

It was a figment of our own imagination and all self-fabricated and assumed Indian penetration in the area. Since there was no wireless or line contact available, messenger's had been sent. The formal orders for 24 Brigade Group to return to their original positions was given only when the GOC 15 Division rushed back to Sialkot from Narowal. The uncertainty of the locations of both 24 Brigade and 25 Cavalry was the leading cause of widespread confusion and matter of great concern to everyone. This confusion persisted the entire night as no one knew what was happening on the ground.

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[13] Annexue-10 is given in Annexures

On the evening of September 7, 1965, 15 Division asked for a sortie of the L-19 aircraft along the International Border. Orders stated that the Indian side should be observed without crossing the boundary. The Army Aviator was asked to specifically look for any significant concentrations and movements of the enemy in the area of Charwa. Captain (Later Major General) Niazi was detailed on this mission and flew along the boundary from Sialkot to River Ravi, noticing no movement or concentration of the enemy. He went to HQ 15 Division and briefed Colonel Staff, Colonel Mehdi. At midnight September 7, 1965, a call came from HQ 15 Division. Colonel Mehdi told Captain Niazi that the Indians had launched their attack at Charwa. The pilot was instructed to fly at first light the next day to confirm this news and to observe precisely the strength and the direction of the enemy attack. Captain Niazi, while doing reconnaissance, noticed an enemy column of tanks moving towards Sialkot on the track Maharjke-Sialkot. He saw the leading tank heading in the direction of Aik Nadi near Faizabad (6431). He tried to get closer to this column in an attempt to get a better estimate of their strength, but the aircraft came under heavy small arms fire. The strength could not be determined and Captain Niazi returned to the Sialkot strip and gave the news to Colonel Staff 15 Division personally. At the strip, the maintenance team headed by Major (Later Brigadier) Saeed counted 32 bullet holes in the aircraft. 15 Division immediately sent some Recoilless Rifles to Aik Nadi. As the enemy tanks arrived near Aik Nadi, Recoilless Rifles fired upon them, forcing them to turn back. It was only a diversionary move.

The morning of the 8th of September saw this confusion and the predicament of the previous day assuming alarming proportions. When I visited 15 Division on the early morning on the 8th of September, Colonel Staff informed me that at first light, the enemy had launched its attack. The central axis of the line of attack was Gadgor- CharwaChobara-Phillarauh. Attached as Annexure-11[14].

The news was alarming. As explained earlier, the 24 Brigade Group had been ordered to move to the Jassar area. Later, when the news of the

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[14] Annexure-11 is given in Annexures

Indian attack along the initially expected direction dawned in the minds of GOC 15 Division while sitting at Narowal, and Headquarters located at Sialkot, the recklessness of their earlier action was staring on their faces as stark reality. They started to realize the gravity of the situation and its possible consequences. Panic and confusion gripped them alike. Hastily, a message was sent to 24 Brigade Group to rush back to their original defensive positions. But beyond that, no one knew if they had gotten it and more importantly their current location. One marveled at the functioning of this Divisional Headquarters, a place where they weren't even in communication with their important and vital formations. The entire area, which was the primary defensive position of 24 Brigade Group, was held now by only 3 FF (excluding one company) and one Company of 2 Punjab. I decided to fly to the area to see the situation myself. I flew out in an L-19 aircraft, first reached Chawinda and then started flying towards Phillaurah. At a distance, I saw a cloud of dust on the track: Charwa- Chobara- Phillaurah. The 2 I/C, Major Nazir, was sitting in the rear seat. As we approached this area and started flying alongside with this column, we saw a long line of enemy vehicles, led by armoured cars, coming along this track towards Phillaurah at high speed. No estimate of their strength could be made. Earlier, while flying from Chawinda to this area, we saw no sign of our troops in this area. 24 Brigade Group had not arrived back yet. It was a critical situation; this sight was of utter helplessness. The enemy was having an unopposed and free run towards Chawinda and beyond to the MRL Canal. I could only pray to God for help. There was nothing that an L-19 could do now; all we could do was to wait and watch. The Indian column kept charging along the track towards Phillaurah. Suddenly the 2 I/C gave a shout of bandits to me on the wireless. I took my eyes away from the column and looked up in the sky. I suddenly saw a flight of 4 aircraft. The instinctive reaction was to brace for any evasive action that may be required. To my surprise, I saw those planes diving towards the enemy column. The rockets fired were accurate in targeting the enemy vehicles. It seemed that Allah had almost immediately answered my prayers. The subdued mood changed almost spontaneously into one of excitement and exhilaration. The aircraft belonged to the Pakistan Air Force, and they had started to inflict heavy damage on the advancing enemy. There were puffs of smoke and fire coming out every time these planes would dive towards their targets and fire their rockets. I remember that I counted up to nine and then suddenly my focus shifted to the panicky reaction of the tanks and the other armoured vehicles in that attacking column. They immediately started to disperse and rushed towards the mud houses of the nearby villages. There was a great excitement, and the sight was very reassuring. To save themselves from a lethal pounding, they went charging into those mud houses to find a suitable camouflage for their Tanks and other Armoured Vehicles. This gave them some respite. By now it was becoming clearer to me that it was an Armoured Formation. The earlier story of the news of the capture of 1 Armoured Division mail bag flashed in the back of my mind. I sensed that this is their main strike force- 1 Armoured Division. The timely action of our Air force, between 0700 hours and 0730 hours on the morning of September 8, 1965, had brought the Indian advance to a grinding halt. The air strike lasted for about 25-30 minutes. But the advancing enemy columns had lost precious time. They remained dispersed, static and buried in those mud houses for nearly over an hour. When the Indians recovered, regrouped and resumed their advance, they lacked the original speed and ferocity of their attack. The column formed up again as they emerged out of the villages around Phillaurah and began their advance towards Chawinda. I could notice only the focal column advancing in line formation from Phillaurah on the track to Chawinda. I could now distinctly see that some Armoured Vehicles were in front in the lead and the tanks came following them, mostly in line and not dispersed.

I kept the L-19 flying alongside the Indian advancing column. The need[15] for fire support capability with the Army Aviation was never so acutely felt before. But sitting unarmed in an L-19 aircraft was quite depressing.

The advancing enemy column came close to Chawinda. So far there had been little to no resistance to their advance on the ground. While I continued flying around the area, evaluating the situation on the ground, I was keeping my eyes focused on the advancing Indian columns approaching Chawinda and at the same time looking for some signs of movement and activity from the direction of Chawinda, waiting for our troops to arrive. The fear of our own troops not arriving in time was creating an unsettling feeling among us. While I was immersed in these thoughts, I suddenly saw some signs of movements from the direction of Chawinda. To my delight, I saw the 14 tanks emerge in extended line formation and arrive right in the way of the advancing Indian Column. It was a dream comes true! Here they came, out of the blue; our broad line of defence came rolling out of Chawinda to suddenly confront and challenge the thin but long line of enemy forces approaching in that direction. This unexpected appearance of our force took the enemy forces by surprise. They had enjoyed a free run so far. They were not expecting to see our Patton Tanks in this area of operation. Equally, they were intimidated by the sight of 14 Tanks all appearing in one line abreast formation. It gripped them in panic, and they immediately turned around and sought a rapid retreat. The sight was very heartwarming, and the assessment was that a very precarious situation had been very dramatically stabilised. This encouraged the tanks of 25 Cavalry to close on to the retreating enemy columns, even so, there was no tank engagement that I observed. The approximate one- hour delay imposed by our Air Force on the advance of enemy armour had proved to be one of the single most critical and vital interventions. It was the biggest of the blessings of Allah (SWT). None of our accounts, even the official history of the Pakistan Air Force, has highlighted this most meaningful and valuable contribution. Major Mohammad Ahmad arrived with his Squadron at Chawinda at the nick of time. Just another 10-15 minutes delay in the arrival of our own troops would have dramatically turned the events into a grave situation for us to handle and control.

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[15] At that time Army Aviation had no fire power capability. I am highlighting the feeling of the need of having this capability at that time.

Seeing that the situation had been stabilised, I flew back to Sialkot and went straight to Headquarters 15 Division. They had been anxiously waiting for my arrival and along with it the first credible news of the situation.

For the second time in two days, accurate and authentic information provided by Army Aviation sources proved salutary. Calm prevailed in the same minds that I had seen in disarray earlier in the day. Their recklessness had been timely covered up and saved them, and the Army, from any humiliation of a major defeat on the very first day of battle. On return to the strip at Sialkot, I took off in a helicopter which was piloted by Captain Nauman Mahmud. We went to Chawinda and from there flew to Phillarauh. As we were nearing Phillarauh, at a distance near Gadgor, I saw the tank battle raging, leaving a cloud of dust and smoke in their trail. Some sounds of tank fire were heard. The enemy tanks, which had reached close to Chawinda, had been checked and brought to a grinding halt. Now, I was watching a reversal of the initial situation. We had the advantage and the enemy tanks were being forced to withdraw in the first major tank engagement in this sector. There was a lot of dust in the area due to which I was not able to distinguish between our tanks and the enemy tanks, but felt a sense of satisfaction that during the short span of time that I was away, our forces had made considerable progress. I was keen on landing and contact our ground troops to get a close and more accurate sense of the actual situation on the ground. The area of the tank battle offered no such possibility, and so I decided to fly towards Phillaurah. At a distance, next to a building, I saw a few jeeps and some personnel in uniform standing around them. From the looks of them, they appeared to be Pakistani. It encouraged me and we decided to land close to them. On landing, I was very pleasantly surprised to see 24 Brigade Commander, Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik and CO 25 Cavalry, Lieutenant Colonel Nisar, along with their skeleton staff standing there. The building turned out to be a local school. We could not have hoped to have a better contact on the ground other than these two persons. They had seen, endured and experienced the entire fiasco and the flap that went along the entire day of September 7, 1965. And now they were central to the most crucial stage of the combat which was to ultimately determine the entire course of the war in this critical Sector. Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik, very excitedly mentioned that a major tank battle was going on in the general area of Gadgor. I informed him that I had already seen the action from the air, but I could not assess, evaluate and determine as to the exact progress made so far. I could only draw consolation from the fact that the enemy tanks which had reached close to the vicinity of Chawinda had now been pushed back to the general area of Chobara and Gadgor. He confirmed my assessments and further explained that our armour had so far inflicted very heavy damage on their tank formations and were forcing them to retreat. From our side, the battle was being fought by entirely 25 Cavalry alone. He, at that time, had no assessment of the strength of the enemy, but could safely guess that it was an Armoured Formation of the Indian Army. According to his estimation, they had so far knocked out over 16 enemy tanks against the loss of 4 tanks of our own in the area of Gadgor. This news was very heartwarming. Some of this was already evident to me from the helicopter, but coming from the force commander on the spot and in the area of his direct responsibility, it was the first accurate assessment I had heard. The Brigade Commander was explaining all these details with full confidence and appeared to be a person completely in control of the situation. Along with CO 25 Cavalry, he was directly in contact with the enemy and had stabilized the unhinging of the defences caused by the hasty and irrational decisions made on the previous day. His message was very clear: the catastrophe that had been inflicted upon ourselves by our higher command had been averted by the timely arrival of 25 Cavalry and 24 Brigade. But the battle so far was only that of 25 Cavalry. Lieutenant Colonel Nisar just briefly filled me in with what had gone through his mind, how he had drawn his own conclusions and finally the sketchy orders that he had given. It started with the narration of the orders for a move to Jassar, a more graphic account of the dinner at Narowal, being served with full linen and silver cutlery and finally exploding with the sounds of the guns. I had already heard most of the details in my briefings at Headquarters 15 Division, and have covered already. What is more pertinent are the reactions that all these events had caused and the sequence of their unfolding? Just as it dawned on their minds that the main enemy offensive had been launched in the corridor of the long anticipated and appreciated direction, the Acting GOC, Brigadier Ismail, got up from the dining table abruptly, and before rushing to his jeep to return to Sialkot, he could only tell Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik to do something! It obviously did not mean any damned thing. But it only spoke of the calibre and the professionalism of the man in Command. The Brigade Commander could only tell the CO 25 Cavalry to rush back with his tanks towards Chawinda while he orders the rest of the Brigade to also move back in all haste and urgency. The lead squadron picked for this step was B Squadron, commanded by Major Mohammad Ahmad. He was told to proceed to Chawinda post haste while the CO brings the rest of the regiment behind him. All these were just blind moves, just intuitive rather than based on any information about the position and the strength of the enemy. Since the area was all familiar to them so no time was lost and despite all the hassle and the congestion on that narrow road, Major Ahmad arrived with all his 14 tanks at Chawinda. The rest of his action I have already covered as witnessed by me. It is the move of the Regiment less this squadron and their direction of advance which proved most critical and decisive.

Describing this and thoughts behind it as narrated by Lieutenant Colonel Nisar, clearly reflect their significance and importance. As appreciated by him, since he had no precise information about the enemy positions and his direction of attack, all he could do was to only fish for it. It was basically a matter of instinct and gut feeling that they decided to move the regiment less B Squadron to the general area of Dugri. As stated earlier all this was only a blind move. But as described by him, maybe that it had the hand of the providence in this! It had all developed into a classic armour manoeuvre. It was by accident rather than by design or choice. One squadron of 25 Cavalry had suddenly met and contained the onslaught of the approaching enemy armour at Chawinda frontally and the Regiment less this Squadron had accidently appeared at the flank of this armour thrust. This turned the tables on the enemy. The fight of the unequal, through their ignorance and our bliss, had shaken the enemy, and they recoiled back from where they had debouched in the early hours of the morning. All these details I had already witnessed from the L-19 and described as such. He further said that the Regiment less this squadron moved to the area of Dugri via Chawinda. A blind move turned into a classic armour manoeuvre. The attacking enemy force had decided to advance along with three columns and along three axes. What I had earlier visualized was that opponent came advancing on two axes but it transpired later to be three, with a regiment along two axes and a motorized Infantry Brigade Group covering their right flank on the third axis. The column which was moving along the Central axis was ahead of the other two columns.

This resulted in very heavy casualties of the enemy tanks. From some estimates 10-15 enemy tanks had been destroyed in this early encounter so far. But most importantly, the enemy soon lost the initiative and started to withdraw towards Chobara.

I flew back to Sialkot and gave the news to HQ 15 Division. There was a great feeling of joy and elation. I then flew to HQ 6 Armoured Division. This was my first visit. Later, it became a routine. GOC 6 Armoured Division was very pleased to see the aviator, as he had a high hope and expectancy of attaining accurate and real battlefield information. He was not disappointed. They had been moved into the area earlier. They had carried out their liaison with 15 Division and had also done the recce of the area. But they were totally blank about the situation at Jassar Bridge and the possible line and penetration of the enemy attack. When the full account of the operations was given, there were jubilations all over. Major (Later General) KM Arif, who was G-II (Operations) excitedly remarked, " Sir, it was a typical armour manoeuvre." He was quickly reminded that it was not planned and executed as such. I told him he should not try to take any credit for it. The whole move, deployment and advance of 25 Cavalry was a blind operation and was by accident only; rather than any part of a plan. No one knew where the enemy was. By accident one squadron had moved frontally and the Regiment less than one Squadron had hit the enemy armoured formation on the flank. This incident is being highlighted again, because when later in major engagements of tank formations; such occasions presented themselves for such typical tank manoeuvres, there were no Guderian's thinking of it and develop such standard Armour outflanking moves. It was always a case of frontal engagements of own tanks against onrushing enemy tank formations. It was always a slugging match with hardly any initiative shown by both the sides. There was no strategy or tactics involved in the handling of the armour units and formations! Regardless of where the credit lay for this, the timely arrival of 25 Cavalry, proved very momentous. The courage, determination and fearless action of the crews of 25 Cavalry must be recognized and recorded as such. Later in the day, from the wreckage of one tank of 16 Cavalry, a complete plan of their attack was recovered. From the captured document of the Operational Order "Nepal" to the utter horror and surprise of everyone, it transpired that it was the fullfledged and even fully reinforced Indian I Armoured Division, which had launched this attack. The leading regiment was 16 Cavalry and on its Left flank was 17 Horse; with 4 Horse in reserve. That 25 Cavalry had grappled with the enemy 1 Armoured Division single handed came as a total surprise, shock and disbelief, but it was entirely correct. No annals of any Military History can offer any comparable action. But with pride it must be recounted that it was done very efficiently, boldly and admirably. I had a close look at the operation from early morning to late afternoon. There was no more enthralling experience than that. I was a privy to watching it most closely, both from the air and on the ground. The words fail me to describe the day's battle adequately, but the actual memories and recollections gathered, linger on as fresh and vivid in mind as it happened only yesterday on that fateful day.

This full-fledged enemy Armoured Division attack supported by two Infantry Divisions and a lorried Brigade, as 14 Division did not reach the area in time, was not only halted after it had gained its momentum but forced to recoil and withdraw back to the positions close to from where the attack was launched on the morning of the 8th of September. It penetrated up to Chawinda, and by the evening on the 8th of September, the entire enemy might were made to roll back to just south of Charwa. From some accounts, one troop of 25 cavalry had even got as far forward as Maharajke but had to be pulled back. Operational orders recovered from the destroyed tank of 16 cavalry in the evening of 8th September give all details. Annexure-12[16]. To everyone's disbelief, 25 Cavalry had single-handedly fought the entire day's action with admirable bravery and courage. This attack was successful in earlier creating a surprise element and started to gain some momentum. At the end of the day, the result was that these forces recoiled back to their firm base, which was earlier secured by their Infantry Division, and they sat there now nursing their wounds of the entire day's most ambitious and adventurous action; which all seemed so unbelievable. The amazing part was that this feat was accomplished by the daring of 25 Cavalry, all by themselves. 24 Brigade Group through their timely arrival had stabilised the battlefield and had subsequently taken defensive positions in the area GadgorPhillaurah by the evening of the 8th of September. 3 FF less one Company, which had earlier been the first to have encountered the main enemy attack at the border, put up a gallant fight but were ordered to withdraw to Chawinda by Col Staff 15 Division, when their positions were overrun by the enemy onslaught. They trickled back individually, but formed up into a Battalion again, and to their credit were back at Phillurah-Gadgor defence complex of 24 Brigade by evening on the 8th of September, and were again ready, fully determined and full of spirit to grapple with the enemy. It was a remarkable transformation after being routed earlier in the day. They braced there and held back all the subsequent enemy attacks and even carried out some limited counterattacks. It showed their grit and mettle. But it is the spirit of this attack and action of 25 Cavalry, the entire day of the 8th of September, which stands out in full reality and endeared it in the hearts and the minds of those, who were privileged to witness and feel it.

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[16] Annexure 12 Operational Orders 16 Cavalry 7th September, 1965 is given in Annexures

In the evening, I went to Gujranwala and briefed HQ 1 Corps, about the entire day‘s fighting. They had been completely in the dark up to this point; they did not even know the location of the own troops on the ground. I was totally amazed and astonished at the lack of information at that level of Command. After I gave a detailed briefing to the Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana, he felt more composed and enthusiastically asked me to keep visiting Corps HQ regularly to keep briefing them on the latest situation. On the 8th of September, the primary task performed by Army Aviation was collection of vital information and briefings at HQ 15 Division, 6 Armoured Division and HQ 1 Corps. These proved very critical in the situation’s assessment and formulation of the future plans of these formations. There was not much activity in the way of adjustment of arty fire. This was basically so because the units of 4 Corps Arty kept shuttling between Pasrur and Narowal, in response to the confusing picture at Jassar and the following conflicting orders.

The actions of 24 Brigade Group on the 8th of September were, most appropriately, carried out by 25 Cavalry through pure coincidence, either by fate or by chance it seemed, and were most salutary. None on the ground could make any estimation of the strength of the enemy attack. But HQ 15 Division was acutely aware that it was the major enemy attack. The line of thrust of the likely offensive in this Sector was clearly perceived as the route Charwa-Chobara-Phillaurah- Chawinda. Major General Yahya on the 6th of September had clearly defined this appreciation to me well in advance. Since the morning of the 8th of September, Colonel S.G. Mehdi was unambiguously emphasising this direction of the enemy thrust. While Mehdi had correctly identified this threat; but the unhinging of the defences, by the ill-perceived orders to dispatch 24 Brigade Group to Jassar on the 7th of September, were clearly showing on his face. Typically, I knew him as a man, fully composed, confident, overbearing and assertive, but the hassle and the confusion of the day before had clearly unnerved him. The gravity of the situation was such that most others would also have panicked. Brigadier Ismail, the G.O.C. 15 Div, was only a passenger there; Colonel Mehdi was calling all the shots. This hapless turning of events left him somewhat dazed, uncertain and confused. It was only after I had completed my aerial recce of the area and gave the briefing to him he could recompose himself. But he was never the same again. He had built up a very prominent and influential image of his professional prowess. Many people later described this as a farce and a cover for his real self. I had known him as our Adjutant, my company commander at PMA and later as BM of the Infantry Brigade at Peshawar. I had a very high perception of him; considering him to be a brave, intelligent, innovative man and in particular, someone who was well versed in Military History. I will not condemn him as most others did, but in my estimation, he was not the same man that I had known all these years.

Towards the afternoon of 8th of September, Major General Tikka Khan had taken over the Command of 15 Division. I had just walked out of the dugout Bunker of HQ 15 Division that I met Major General Tikka Khan, as he was arriving towards the Bunker. I went back with him into the Bunker, where he was met by Brigadier Ismail and Colonel Mehdi. He told them that he had come just to have the briefing about the situation on the ground. Colonel Mehdi gave him the entire rundown of the situation as it was. And after having listened to everything, Major General Tikka Khan announced that he had taken over the Command of 15 Division under instructions from Corps HQ and GHQ. He accepted both Brigadier Ismail and Colonel Mehdi as part of 15 Division, not showing any acrimony towards them. In fact, it was Colonel Mehdi's actions on the 9th of September that was the first time Major General Tikka Khan was upset with either of them. The dugout positions of 15 Division HQ, had been accurately located by the enemy guns. They were bringing down intense fire of their guns at that position. Colonel Mehdi started strongly suggesting that HQ 15 Division should be moved back across the MRL canal, towards Sambrial. Major General Tikka Khan very firmly told Colonel Mehdi not to suggest this ever again, maintaining that HQ 15 Division will stay in Sialkot with the troops regardless of the shelling. The next episode that took place was that Major (Later Major General) Bokhari arrived in HQ 15 Division with his Cobra Company. This was the only unit with the newly acquired antitank missiles. Soon after they arrived in the area, orders to dispatch the Company to 6 Armoured Division, which was now facing the main enemy Armour thrust, were given to HQ 15 Division. Colonel Mehdi called Major Bokhari and briefed him to report to HQ 6 Armoured Division along with his Cobra Company. I arrived in HQ 15 Division, towards the afternoon of the 9th of September, and saw that there was complete confusion regarding the whereabouts of this Company. Someone just suggested that the Grid Reference of the location of HQ 6 Armoured Division given by Colonel Mehdi was wrong. It was also inferred that the location he gave to Major Bokhari was now in enemy hands, which made matters a lot worse than they would have normally been. Colonel Mehdi picked up the telephone and called up someone. He asked him, “Do you remember the briefing that I had given to Major Bokhari?” and then proceeded further to ask, “Do you recall the Grid Reference given by me at which Major Bokhari was ordered to report.” He then held the receiver in his hand and started waving it. While so doing, he asked everyone around, “ Listen to what is being said on the phone.” Suddenly Major General Tikka lost his patience. He angrily shouted, “Mehdi I have had enough of your dramatics. Shut up and get out.” It stunned everyone; I had never seen Major General Tikka, in such temper and mood. And this was the story of how the very promising career of Colonel Mehdi came to a rather abrupt end. After the war, he was posted as Station Commander in Karachi and on one of my visits there, I met him at the Airport where he asked me to accompany him to his office. He placed before me the ACR that Major General Tikka Khan had given him. I read it very carefully. It was damning and damaging. He was extremely emotional. He asked me whether I would go as far as to call him a coward, to which I answered in the negative. I was a privy to all the relevant episodes of HQ 15 Division, right from the 6th of September to the day when he was removed as Colonel Staff, and knew that there had been no act of cowardice on his part. Undoubtedly, the circumstances, the events, the misreporting of HQ 115 Brigade, had all clouded his mind and judgment. I will not pass any judgment beyond this. The position at HQ 6 Armoured Division and HQ 1 Corps that I visited in the evening was equally not very re-assuring. This I can say with most emphasis for HQ 1 Corps.

I had seen the battle rage the whole day. The aerial view gave me an excellent picture of the operations conducted. In summing up, I may say that at first observation, the intensity of the enemy attack was easily not discernible. I could observe two clear columns of the enemy thrust; the one on the axis of Charwa-Chobara-Phillaurah- Chawinda had clearly outpaced the column which was protecting its left flank. Although I could not clearly make out the strength, it was clear that it was a major attack. At that time I had not observed the enemy column that was pressing itself to secure the right flank of the main strike force. I had graphically given all these details at HQ 15 Division, 6 Armoured Division, and HQ 1 Corps. The whole day I kept observing these operations carefully and very closely, and I have already described all the action.

By the morning of the 9th of September, it had become crystal clear to all that the attack on the 8th of September was the full-fledged Indian attack and was their major offensive. The complete picture became absolutely clear, and I vividly had it registered in my mind with all its details. This was their best attempt and chance at trying to achieve a quick breakthrough. It was a miracle that 25 Cavalry had all by itself, handled and thwarted it. I can now reconstruct all the details in all clarity. The attack plan had clearly emerged; it envisaged the operations to be launched by three Infantry Divisions and one Armoured Division. 6 Mountain Division and 26 Infantry Division were to secure a bridgehead, and through it, the 1st Armoured Division was to launch the main thrust at 0600 Hours on 8th Sept. The planned attack was along three Axes. The Red Route, the Blue Route and the Green Route. 16 Cavalry Group, which was the unit of General J.N. Chaudhry, was advancing on route Pind Bhago- Charwa-Chobara-Phillaurah (Red Route). The flanks of this formation were covered by 17 Horse Group on the left (Blue Route) and 43 Lorried Infantry Brigade Group, on the right (Green Route). 14 Division was asked if in position, to capture Zafarwal. With the availability of this information, the picture of the previous day's battle, as I had observed from the air, became clear and established. It was in complete conformity with what I had seen, assessed and reported, with all additional details now added to it. The two columns that I had been observing were the charge of 16 Cavalry and 17 Horse. The pace of 16 Cavalry on Red Route had outstripped that of 17 Horse on Blue Route and was moving along way ahead of the formations on both their flanks. There was no sign of 14 Divisions movements towards Zafarwal. The Green Route on which 43 Lorried Infantry Brigade Group was moving, was too far away from the area that I kept flying the entire day and as such I could not see this element and its movement.

It keeps emerging before my eyes again and again, and I cannot help but repeat myself. I was privileged to watch all this action with my own eyes. I cannot forget the delay imposed earlier by our Air Force on the advancing enemy Armoured columns. This was a crucial one hour gained. My reaction then was that it was the divine hand of Allah (SWT) that guided and caused it. Even so, I knew that it was the will of the people on the ground that accomplished it. I have gone into all details, and I would suffice it to conclude that this was one of our finest moment of the war.

The events on the 8th of September had confirmed and driven home to all, that the attack was launched with the full weight of all the Indian troops available in this sector. The direction and may be the magnitude of the assault had already clearly been assessed and perceived. The appreciations made earlier had determined and defined it. What was not understood then and even to-day, as to why no thorough and detailed plans were made to meet this threat. 15 Division was stretched from SialkotJassar, but the corridor of Charwa-Chobara-Phillaurah-Chawinda was the most sensitive area. 24 Brigade Group was responsible for this, but why no proper fortified and elaborate defensive positions were planned and prepared for it? Equally important was that the fallback positions should also have been developed. Chawinda-Zafarwal and Badiana were our natural pivotal points. They had to be also thoroughly planned, fortified and ready to provide stable alternative positions for the Infantry to hold. When I landed at Phillaurah on the morning of the 8th of September, I met Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik and Lieutenant Colonel Nisar, who were standing in the open next to their command jeep near the School building. They had no prepared bunkers. But surely the whole defences should have been prepared, fully fortified and appropriately mined. When I visited Chawinda, Zafarwal, Badiana and Rakh Baba Bhure Shah, it was much worse. The defences had been hurriedly prepared and that too after the arrival of 6 Armoured Division in the area. This was the responsibility of 15 Division, and they had absolutely failed in that. Had this been done properly before the war, these solid pivots would have proved to be vital focal points for the Infantry to firmly man and hold. The tank forces would have thus retained complete freedom to manoeuvre and consequently, could have been used whenever and wherever they were required. It struck me then; it had been fairly evident before too, that 15 Division had been inept and ill prepared for their tasks. The bunkers and well-prepared positions in and around Sialkot proved very useful. Why the same preparation was not extended to this significant ground? Whatever blunders had been made. Fortunately, they got covered up by the gallant troops on the ground.

On the morning of 9th September 1965, everyone was aware of the fact that the attack of enemy 1 Armoured Division attack had been blunted. Though they had failed, they were now regrouping and planning their next move. We had enough time to do our own planning and preparations for their new offensive. Though HQ 1 Corps had moved 6 Armoured Division in this area and they had arrived during the night of the 7th of September in their battle locations, still they were given no plans or orders. They were just vaguely assigned the role of destroying enemy penetrations East of MRL canal.

The location of our landing strip at the Sialkot Polo Grounds had so far remained peaceful. After the hectic activity on the 6th, 7th & 8th September 1965, we could finally rest and sleep. Across the road was the location of 8 Medium Regt. The Adjutant of the Regiment was Captain Aslam (Later Colonel). Being an Army pilot, he and the other pilots of the squadron were in regular liaison with each other. This became rather ominous. As the hostilities broke out throughout the Sialkot sector since early September 8, the guns of 8 Medium Regiment became very active. In retaliation, it started attracting enemy Counter Bombardment from the night of the 8th of September. Since only a thin road divided the Aviation positions from medium gun location, the strip began receiving a fair degree of the enemy fire. Though the trenches had been dug and the aircraft were well dispersed, but the first taste of the enemy fire provoked hasty, panicky and may even be described as somewhat comical reactions. The trenches had been earmarked for different personnel, but in haste, when the pilots and the other crews ran to take cover, the principle of first come first serve prevailed. Everyone was desperately rushing to the nearest trench. Major Nazir, the 2 I/C, ran obliviously towards one he had earmarked for himself. On approaching it, he instinctively took a leap in the air to quickly jump into it. As his thick frame was still in the air and was about to fall inside, he noticed that it was already occupied. Rather than falling in the trench over the occupants and crushing their bones, he balanced himself on either side of it and hoist himself upright. The two occupants thanked their lucky stars; they had evaded both the enemy shelling and their own 2 I/C dropping over them. Remarkably, this incident lightened the tension from the first real battlefield indoctrination of 1 Army Aviation Squadron.

On the morning of September 9, 1965, I asked the permission of GOC 15 Division to move the squadron to Sambrial. It was foolhardy to expose the aircraft and the crews to hostile enemy fire, and the GOC readily approved. While the squadron moved to Sambrial on the 9th of September, the tempo of war stepped up. The focus and the intensity of the enemy attack had clearly shifted to the Phillaurah and Chawinda area. Thus a part of the flight composed of Capt Lateef (known as Lateef Bhai, who later became a Major General in Bangladesh) and a few other pilots, remained to support 15 Division, and the rest of the squadron became more directly involved to support 6 Armoured Division. Captain Lateef maintained his dedication to support 15 Division, while the other pilots kept rotating. 15 Division was full of praise for the Army Aviation efforts and initiated the Citation for the award of SJ to Captain Lateef. I kept my routine of liaison with HQ 15 Division regularly and daily.

The area of responsibility between 15 Division and 6 Armoured Division were assigned, and the inter-division boundaries were defined. 24 Brigade Group came in responsibility of 6 Armoured Division and was placed under their command. Some additional troops as 14(P) Brigade were also promised, and 4 Corps Artillery was to provide Artillery support to the total area of operations of 6 Armoured Division. This was between ChawindaPasrur. 24 Brigade kept their defensive positions at Phillaurah-Gadgor. These were further strengthened by employing 9 FF, with under command ACT, in area Phillaurah-Deg Nedi, with at least a platoon at Zafarwal. Guides Cavalry was in area Badiana, extending towards SIALKOT. 22 Lancers was West of Badiana, with their Reconnaissance Troops operating North of Badiana.

The Squadron less than one flight were now primarily focusing the area of operations of 6 Armoured Division. The pilots were fully involved and remained abreast of the activities and operations of 6 Armoured Division. I too kept a very close contact with Headquarters 6 Armoured Division and some of its units. The visits to Headquarterss 1 Corps were also regular. Realising the folly of keeping Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana in Command of the only and the most important Command of 1 Corps in the Army, General Headquarters hurriedly dispatched Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan, as the Deputy Corps Commander. He was Commandant Staff College, Quetta, and because of the war, all courses had been canceled, and the officers were posted to different units and formations. He was being an intellectual and an officer who had a good grasp of the Military Strategy and Tactics. One felt that he will provide saner judgement at HQ 1 Corps, but I soon realized that it was not to be.

All these activities and regular liaison of Army Aviation officers with units and formations provided a clear and authentic picture of the battle at all critical levels of command. This proved to be the most usefullink developed and was a key in dissemination of the timely, accurate and vital information as seen and observed by the airborne eyes. It also helped in streamlining of wireless links for the direction of the artillery fire and in directing the strikes of our Air Force on to the lucrative enemy targets.

It was also a great help in all decision making.

With the arrival of the Deputy Corps Commander, some planning and assessment of the situation became visible at that level. Earlier it appeared that Corps Headquarters was just a mere formality; a Command only on paper where there was no visible sign of any collection and collation of battlefield information, analysing it and then making any operational plans to further guide and control the course of the battle. Leave that alone, I was horrified to see that at that level of Command there were no channels for seeking and evaluating essential battlefield information even. What to talk of knowing the information of the location and strength of the Enemy Forces, at that level the policy makers were not even in the knowledge of the dispositions of their own troops on the ground. Major General Yaqub made out some difference in the thinking and planning at that level of Command, but he too was handicapped as he too never could get any authentic battlefield information; an element without which no understanding could be developed to come out with any final plans of action. Army Aviation appeared to be their only link, channel and source of any authentic information. And that too was not available to them all the time and when the urgency so demanded. He made some efforts of his own to plan his own ideas and assessments of the situation and develop his plans and orders to meet the situation and the threats as perceived by him. Some thoughts of his thinking and planning he reduced in writing and issued as part of his perceptions and options. The same are attached as at Annexure-13[17].

The entire planning for the defence of this vital and most sensitive sector had been done by Major General Yahya Khan when he was Commanding 15 Division at Sialkot. As he told me on the morning of the 6th of September, that he had done the reconnaissance of the entire area on foot; and the significance of that statement was unraveling itself. It was a well-conceived plan for which Phillarauh was the pivot on the enemy's most likely route of attack. It was around this pivot that our defence was laid. The force provided was equally well balanced. The primary defences at Phillaurah-Gadgor were held by 24 Brigade Group. 9 FF had given additional strength and flank protection to 24 Brigade. With 6 Armoured Division, there was a powerful force available to launch any counterattacks against enemy outflanking manoeuvres. Sialkot and Jassar Bridge had also been held in some strength. The troops of 6 Armoured Division were now also providing stable pivots at Badiana and Rakh Baba Bhure Shah. 11 Cavalry was held in reserve at Pasrur. This gave a lot of flexibility in choices to 6 Armoured Division, to react to any enemy offensive plans. But for the unhinging of these defences, for the ill- conceived counter attack at Jassar Bridge and the move of 24 Brigade Group to undertake that, this was a professional plan of layout of our Defences in the area. These views were adequately strengthened and clearly proven, when enemy attacks were successfully repulsed on September 9th and 10th, 1965. Since 24 Brigade Group had been deeply involved and committed, in all the grim fighting as of the 7th of September onwards, the plans at Corps Headquarters were now being made for their relief.

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[17] Annexure-13 Concept of Operations as envisaged by Maj Gen Yaqub is given in Annexures

Early on the morning of the 10th day of September, again a powerful enemy attack was launched against Gadgor from the direction of Rurki Kalan, Jahr, Chobara and Josaqh Kotli. This attack again was with the strength of an Armoured Regiment and fully supported by all available Artillery, Infantry and Air. By 1030 Hours, this attack was repulsed by 24 Brigade and 25 Cavalry. The whole day, all enemy repeated efforts to form up his Armour and Infantry at Bahadurpur, Chobara area, to mount any further attacks, were effectively broken up through concentrated and efficient Artillery fire.

When I visited Corps HQ on the evening of the 8th of September, I had given the detailed and the graphic picture of the entire day's battle as I had seen and experienced with my own eyes. It was clearly conveyed that it was the major enemy attack. No one knew the details of the other Indian formations in this operation, but the presence of the Indian 1 Armoured Division was clearly established and was now indisputable. The earlier capture of the documents from the enemy DR on the 5th of September, which were flown over by us to GHQ, had also indicated enemy 1 Armoured Division in the area. This was perhaps ignored at GHQ and may be at the level of Corps HQ as well. But Lieutenant General Gul Hassan, in his "Memoirs" clearly states that they had clearly perceived this likely enemy attack and all their defence plans specifically catered for this contingency: 6 Armoured Division was placed there for that end and purpose.

Headquarters 1 Corps was seized with the planning of their operations based on this information. What input they received from HQ 15 Division and 6 Armoured Division, I am not aware of?

The day of 9th September was relatively quiet. The enemy was licking his wounds inflicted by PAF and 25 Cavalry the previous day. The 4

Corps Artillery was now fully deployed. It covered the entire front, stretching from Badiana to Deg Nadi (Zafarwal) and beyond. Any enemy attack or move would immediately attract the hostile fire of nearly 90 guns, field, medium and heavy calibre. On the evening of 9th September, 24 Brigade Group positions were attacked by enemy tanks and infantry. Own Infantry held its ground, and the tanks of 25 Cavalry broke up the enemy attack. The well- directed fire of all the guns available in the area, by the Army Aviators, provided excellent support. Since the terrain was flat, the ground observers had a very limited field of view. This is where Army Aviator's usefulness proved very critical. With his bird's-eye view of the battlefield, the airborne eyes kept the entire area of the operations under their surveillance. Any movement of the enemy immediately received due attention and the total concentration of all guns in range; which pounded them. This was to become the routine of all the Army Aviators flying in the area from dawn to dusk. From all accounts, a large majority of the Artillery shoots were adjusted by Army Aviators. Though some dispute it, but those familiar with the ground, will bear testimony to the fact that the ground observer hardly, at most positions, had only a very limited range of observation and had no knowledge or idea of any enemy concentrations and moves in the depth. These were only picked, located and targeted under the vigilant eyes of the aerial observer. I need not dwell in any controversy, as almost all had acknowledged and praised our role. The 10th of September was again a relatively quiet day. An enemy attack on 24 Brigade positions was repulsed by 25 Cavalry. This operation was supported by all our guns within range. Army Aviators again came in handy in support. During the day's operations, about seven enemy tanks were destroyed.

Though these operations on the 9th and 10th of September had remained confined to the battle location of 24 Brigade Group and were entirely handled by them exclusively. But the Headquarters at Corps and 6 Armoured Division also had the benefit of following these. They kept studying and analysing the operations conducted by the enemy the whole of the 9th of September. By the morning of the 10th of September 1965, HQ 1 Corps had made up a plan. Since 24 Brigade Group had seen an uninterrupted action from the evening of the 7th of September onwards, the plans at Corps Headquarters were now being drawn for their relief. At 1100 Hours on the 10th of September, the GOC of the 6 Armoured Division was called to Corps HQ. A concept of operations, as developed by Major General Sahibzada Yaqub Khan, the Deputy Corps Commander, was presented to the GOC. It is mentioned that it was developed considering the latest GHQ and Corps Intelligence estimates of the enemy's strength and intentions. There are no details given. All the information that could be gathered, assessed and plans made on, was provided by the ground troops who had done all the fighting on the 8th and 9th of September, This was supplemented and further substantiated as seen, observed and communicated by us from the air. One thing was absolutely clear, that the attack on the 8th of September was led by the Enemy 1 Armoured Division and supported by two Indian Infantry Divisions. This was sufficiently substantiated and confirmed through the capture of the operational orders recovered from one of the enemy tanks destroyed on the evening of the 8th of September. Why this factor did not come in the cognizance and reckoning, while this review was being carried out, is beyond any of my descriptions and understandings. Only even recently, when I was discussing my draft account of 1965 War with Lieutenant General (Retd) Yaqub, he still sincerely believed that he was not aware of the presence of the Indian 1 Armoured Division in this area on the 9th September. That just shows the lack of accurate and authentic information availability at that level. Even the previous fiascos of Jassar Bridge were clear pointers to this discrepancy and failing.

Enemy attacks at Phillaurah-Gadgor defensive positions had been successfully defeated on the 8th and 9th of September. Even on the 10th of September, their attack had been repulsed by 10:30 Hours. Was it not clear that the enemy was trying to either reduce our position in this area or would develop a plan to outmaneuver our defences? They could not launch any major offensive without neutralising or reducing these positions. Our options were equally clear! We could either hold Phillaurah-Gadgor as focal positions and use our Armour and other Motorized Infantry available to provide strength to these posts if they so needed. These could be utilised in the traditional role to attack enemy formations in their flank if they attempted to outmaneuver or bypass these positions. The other option was to hold Phillarauh-Gadgor as a thin line of defence and prepare the central defensive positions around the strong nodal points at Chawinda-Badiana and possibly Zafarwal.

The plan that was developed was neither here nor there. According to the plan, 24 Brigade Group was to pull out of these areas, and 9 FF already covering the track Phillaurah-Zafarwal, and 11 Cavalry were to relieve them and take over the defence of this pivotal area. 11 Cavalry had already seen operations in Chamb Sector and had depleted strength of tanks. The details of these plans are shown as Annexure 14[18]. These are in Major General Yaqub's own hand written transcription.

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[18] Annexure 14 Relief in line Operations is given in Annexures

The most important aspect of such an operation is always the time and space factor. The essential element being that the relieving troops must have enough time to familiarise themselves with the ground and topographic surroundings. They must get enough daylight hours to plan and prepare their defences. Staff College, Quetta, lays down enough emphasis on this aspect in all its teachings, exercises and sand model discussions. But despite his being the Commandant of the very same college, it is inexplicable how Major General Yaqub had missed this aspect. I suppose teaching is one thing, but the practical implementation of these plans is a different ball game altogether.

GOC 6 Armoured Division was called to Corps HQ at 1000 hours, where the plans were given to him. Without the GOC 6 Armoured Division returning to his Headquarters, the plans were passed to Deputy Division Commander to implement. He called Second–in-Command 9 FF and CO 11 Cavalry to the Divisional Headquarters and at 1400 hours they, too, were given the orders. The Deputy Corps Commander visited the 6 Armoured Division HQ in the afternoon to discuss the details of the current/ future plans. The most obvious question that arises here is in regard to the location and involvement of both the Corps Commander and the GOC of the 6 Armoured Division, and the reason for the lack of their presence in the formulation of these plans. Unfortunately, no light has been thrown by any quarters on this important issue. The only logical explanation is that GHQ and other higher ups were fully cognizant of the mistakes they had made in placing such people in Command. They were now trying to rectify this by imposing a Deputy Corps Commander and a Deputy GOC in 6 Armoured Division, positions that had been unheard of before. Through activating them, the standard command was now being by-passed, and this new chain was being given all the authority to act. Leaving this academic discussion apart, the plan, as envisaged and more so, as it was implemented, is the most sordid and morbid chapter of the operations in Sialkot Sector. The relieving units were given the orders in the afternoon. The CO 11 Cavalry was present, but the CO 9 FF was asked to stay back with the unit, and he sent his 2 I/C. It is rather strange logic that the person who was to assume the overall command of these sensitive positions was relayed orders through his 2 I/C. If he had been present himself, it is possible that he would have pointed out the recklessness of these ill-timed orders. The 2 I/C reached the CO 9 FF at 1530 hours, and all the plans regarding the movements of 9 FF and 11 Cavalry were put into action. It is reported that CO 11 Cavalry contacted HQ 6 Armoured Division late at night on the telephone network of HQ 24 Brigade. It is also presumed that CO 9 FF was also present there. These discussions took place in the presence of Commander of the 24 Brigade. Incidentally, he had no prior information of this relief in line operation, he only learned about it through CO of the 11 Cavalry when he arrived there. The 9 FF/11 Cavalry expressed their concern that it might prove too weak for the task given. It is believed that a suggestion by Brigadier Abdul Ali Malik was made, that 24 Brigade Group should stay in their positions and that 9 FF/11 Cavalry Group should further re-enforce them for the night. If the next day the situation remained calm, the relief operations could easily be carried out properly during the daylight available. This was completely ignored and dismissed. In fact, it was the most logical course!

The records also state that what was significant was the state of mind of the two CO's. Accusations or maybe inferences are being made, that there were non- revelation, if not actual concealments, of happenings which became known later. Basically, these were ill planned orders. What chance and opportunity was given for it to be implemented? Was it not crystal clear that it was an impossible task? 24 Brigade Gp was being made to pull out simultaneously with 9 FF/11 Cavalry Group arriving in the area. All this was happening in the middle of the night. What is beyond any logic or reasoning is that how conveniently the whole blame is being shifted to the state of minds of the two CO's and that they were not forthcoming with the actual happenings on the ground? If the two CO's did not give the details, did the Deputy Division Commander and the relevant staff of HQ 6 Armoured Division ask them how satisfactorily the relief in line operations were being carried out? The blame game is now going on, but it was crystal clear where the fault lies. I did not know all the details of this entire plan. But in the evening of 11th Sept, I got the news that Major (Later Brigadier) Muzaffar Malik had been severely injured and was admitted in CMH, Sialkot. Later that day I got to visit him. He was in extreme pain, and upon seeing me, he could only mumble the words, "You people hurt too much." I could not understand the meaning behind this. When I met him subsequently, he was in much better condition and explained that he was trying to tell me he had been hit by an artillery shell. He revealed that the complete relief in line operation was conducted on the roadside as the 11 Cavalry (which was coming in) and 25 Cavalry (which was moving out) met while crossing each other on the road during the middle of the night. He further told me that CO of the 25 Cavalry gave a very brief account of the operations on the 8th of September in particular, and the subsequent operations on the 9th and 10th of September. It was also mentioned, to the disbelief of incoming officers, that it had been stated that it was the entire enemy 1 Armoured Division attack. "Are you trying to suggest that your unit single-handedly battled the whole Armoured Division and pushed them back to the area from where they had debouched on the morning of the 8th of September," was the response that they got from CO and 2 I/C 11 Cavalry. And they subsequently laughed it away, not taking serious note of this looming threat. This reflects how casually the relief in line operation was carried on the night of the 10th of September and what information was provided to the relieving troops! Rather than put the blame squarely at those, primarily the HQ 1 Corps mainly and Deputy Division Commander and Staff of HQ 6 Armoured Division partially, who handled this fiasco, the buck was passed down to the two CO" involved.

When the enemy started its well-conducted attack on the 11th of September, we were in total disarray. They contained our positions from the front and outmaneuvered them with two Armoured Regiments from the left. To complicate the matters further, CO 1 SP was killed, and the CO and 2IC 11 Cavalry were both injured by enemy artillery shelling. They had all been standing in the open near the Phillaurah Rest House. Surely, the planners should have given them some time to familiarise with the area and prepare the defence plan with proper fortified positions. In Muzaffar Malik's own words, "At first light on the 11th of September, I went on top of a close by school building and took out my binoculars to have a first look at the area of our operations with my own eyes. Just as I was observing and taking my view of the ground, I was shocked. I saw an enormous pile of dust caused by the movement of the mass of the enemy armour which was advancing towards our location." He immediately came down to brief his CO, Lieutenant Colonel Aziz and Lieutenant Colonel Abdur Rahman, CO 1 SP, about the impending Indian attack. CO 1 SP immediately got busy bringing down the fire of his guns on these advancing enemy armour formations. An artillery shell fell in the location where they were standing in the open. Lieutenant Colonel Rahman achieved "Shahadat" on the spot. Both the CO and 2 I/C of 11 Cavalry were seriously injured and were evacuated. This fiasco, which was already in the offing, because of the most absurd relief in line plans made by the Deputy Corps Commander and the Deputy GOC 6 Armoured Division, it now took another unfortunate turn. The sudden removal of the other key elements involved in the command of the operations in the area further compounded the situation. The plan of the Indian Attack at Phillarauh is attached at Annexure-15[19].

No one knew about this impending disastrous plan as it was prepared and executed during the night of the 10th of September. I, too, could not sense it when the debacle took place on the next morning. At this stage when the events had overtaken it, GOC 6 Armoured Division took over the command himself, rather than to allow his Deputy Division Commander to continue with this responsibility. Major General Abrar ordered Guides Cavalry to charge towards the West of Phillaurah to relieve the pressure on 11 Cavalry and 9 FF. Earlier CO 9 FF, Lieutenant Colonel Majid made frantic calls to CO Guides Cavalry to extricate them from this predicament they had got stuck in. The CO of Guides Cavalry immediately got his resources put together and gave orders for the attack in the general direction of Bhagowal. A Squadron was tasked to attack North East with Chahr as its objective, with B Squadron instructed to coordinate their attack with them. They were to move on the right flank of -A Squadron and attack Libbe. C Squadron, which was equipped with M36B2, was placed on the reserve. It was a conventional attack with two Squadrons up. Here, the Squadron would also have employed maybe one or two troops ahead. Lieutenant Colonel Gulistan Janjua suddenly realised the gravity of the situation. From different accounts, he knew the enemy 1 Armoured Division in the area and realised that if he were to attack in this formation, he hardly would have six to twelve tanks in front, and they would attack the full Armoured Division. He had to rethink and recalculate, so he called off the previous orders. He gave the new orders on the Regimental wireless net: "The Regiment to form line abreast formation along the railway line and on orders, to start the attack at full speed with all guns ablaze. The direction of the attack to be Bhagowal, with inter Squadron boundary line Libbe inclusive to-B Squadron." He then allowed a little time to all the tanks to regroup and realign at the Railway Line. Finally, he ordered the attack, with the slogan of "Nara-a-Takbir Allah- o-Akbar." Simultaneously all 44 Tanks of Guides Cavalry bust out of their positions and went charging along with the tank of their CO. It was the most spectacular sight. They went charging at full blast, attacking the whole of the Indian 1 Armoured Division, which had by now consolidated their positions in the area. Attached as Annexure-16[20].

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[19] Annexure-15 Plan of Attack on Phillaurah 11th September, 1965 is given in Annexures

I was privileged to see this action from the air. Words are hard to find for an apt description of this charge of most gallant proportions. It reminded me of the Charge of the Light Brigade, "Thundered and volleyed rolled the six hundred!" Of course, the six hundred were replaced by forty-four tanks and, fearlessly, they moved at top speed, knowing that it was the whole of 1 Armoured Division of the Indian Army that they were attacking.

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[20] Annexure-16 Plan of Attack own Guides Cavalry 11th September, 1965 is given in Annexures

This Guides Cavalry attack was launched around 1130 hours. B Squadron met stiff resistance as 17 Horse, and 4 Hudson's Horse had already taken up firm positions in the area Phillaurah-Gadgor. A mere thousand yards short of its objective Libbe, the Squadron Commander Major Abbasi and his Second in Command both embraced "Shaadat."A Squadron had hit the enemy tank formations on their flanks. A tough tank-to- tank fight ensued. After inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy armoured formations, which comprised 17 Horse and 4 Horse and with 16 Cavalry in reserve, Guides Cavalry captured Chahr by 1400 Hours.

This bold attack by the Guides Cavalry could not extricate our troops from being overrun at Phillaurah-Gadgor. However, having hit the flanks and the depth positions of the attacking enemy 1 Armoured Division, it unhinged their offensive partially. The Regiment minus A Squadron had hit the enemy reserve Regiment 16 Lancers, in Bhagowal. The tank crews were sitting, relaxing and enjoying their cups of tea when this lightning fast attack struck and dazed them. A panic seemed to have suddenly gripped them. The enemy in the running back left their tanks abandoned in the area. According to CO Guides Cavalry, Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Gulistan Janjua, they tried to start these Centurion tanks, but since they were not familiar with these, they failed in that. He said they made a mistake in that they did not destroy these. However, Major (Later Lieutenant General) Fazl-i Haq got enough time to empty the tanks of their entire stocks of liquor stacked.

If only one could reenact the scenes from the 11th of September, under a different scenario and more logical dispositions of our troops? Some suggest that rather than this haphazard relief operation being launched; 11 Cavalry and 9 FF should have strengthened those positions of 24 Brigade Group, which they had already held. In that eventuality, the enemy 1 Armoured Division attack would have been met with a much more organized, resolute and planned manner. It is easy to envisage that the fate of this attack would have been much worse than just the limited success achieved by our troops on 11th of September.

That day, the action of Guides Cavalry destroyed twenty-one tanks of the enemy, against their own loss of six Pattons. 11 Cavalry had much higher losses. They had seven Pattons and nine M36B2 taken out in the day's action. The total losses for the day were:-

A. Our own: 22 (including thirteen Patton-s, and nine M36B2)

B. Enemy: 30-45 (including because of the action of PAF)

By the evening even 25 Cavalry was again rushed to extricate 9FF and 11 Cavalry from the area of Phillaurah.

L-19s had been flying in the area, fully keeping abreast with the situation on the ground. They kept providing very timely and useful information about the development of the enemy attack, the location of their tanks, its approximate strength and the direction of their movement. Army Aviators were operating on the wireless nets of artillery units of 1 Corps Artillery and the other available units of Artillery of 6 Armoured Division. This was useful for quick adjustment of Artillery fire.

However, there was no direct contact with our Armour and infantry units. This was a mistake. The information to our fighting units had to be relayed through the artillery nets. Sometimes it caused confusion. Queries and counter queries were being raised, which contributed to the delays. But by far, most of the accounts provided by the Army Aviators proved accurate and timely.

It was clearly appreciated that this entire operation had only partially blunted the strength of the enemy attack at Phillaurah, but he still had his teeth in and with fresh regrouping could launch further attacks in pursuit of attaining his tactical objectives in this area of operation. GOC 6 Armoured Division was of the view that he must first consolidate his position at Chawinda before he could take any offensive action, however, limited it may be. With these thoughts, General Abrar then flew to HQ 1 Corps and formed his future plans.

On September 12th & 13th, 1965, the news at Zafarwal and the surrounding areas was conflicting. There are so many different and contradictory accounts of the situation recorded in the war diaries of different units, and even in the official history of the war compiled by Major General Shaukat Reza, where he questions the ability of the aerial Observer to even pick 10-15 enemy tanks moving towards Zafarwal. It is the account of the Army Aviators, of the picture as they perceived, which is being recorded. There is enough evidence for its credibility. Although there may be some gaps, some assessments and deductions drawn, not completely without fault, and possibly some mistakes made in the reporting of the actual information, but by and far, the main events and their description provided from the eyewitness accounts of the Army Aviators are considered accurate and authentic and have been chronicled. On the 12th of September, I sent Captain (Later Major General) Niazi for the surveillance of the general area of Zafarwal. Army Aviator noticed some enemy movement towards Zafarwal. He made an estimate of some

10-15 tanks and some infantry. This information was passed on to the 6 Armoured Division. They reacted, and Zafarwal was occupied during night-time on the 12th of September by 4 FF and a squadron of 32 TDU. On the morning of the 13th September, the enemy attacked the Zafarwal Sector. A Squadron of 32 TDU (Shermans) vacated their positions and started to withdraw. The pilot of L-19 operating in the area, Captain Niazi, was told on the wireless net to give the message to the squadron to immediately return to Zafarwal. He was told that in the face of the enemy attack, our Infantry positions were holding ground and the situation was turning in our favour. It was emphasized to him he must forcefully tell the squadron to move back to Zafarwal urgently in support of 4 FF. The pilot flew over the tanks, moving towards Dhamtal. By his gestures, he kept indicating to them to return to Zafarwal, but there was no response forthcoming. He wrote a message and dropped it. The message was picked up, even so, they kept moving towards Dhamtal. Realising the seriousness of the situation, the pilot landed the aircraft on the road, in front of the withdrawing tanks. A Risaldar was in command of the Squadron at that time. Captain Niazi personally explained the position to him and emphatically ordered him to return to Zafarwal. The tanks were thus successfully sent back and later participated in the defence of Zafarwal against an enemy incursion which was defeated and broken up. It was learned later that the Squadron Commander of 32 TDU, Major Masud, had been spotted hiding in a nearby sugar cane crop in civilian dress. For this disgraceful and despicable act of cowardice, Major Masud was Court-Martialled. Whatever the controversy of the events and the contradictory news and battlefield reports, the Army Aviator did ensure the timely return of the tanks to these vital positions. Although other versions stand at variance about some of the details of the operation, the role of Army Aviator landing on the road and sending the tanks back to Zafarwal remains undisputed in the history.

With the routing of the positions of 11 Cavalry and 9 FF and the losing of ground at Gadgor and Phillaurah, the railway line from Chawinda, which passes through Rakh Baba Bhuhre Shah and Badiana, became the pivot of our defences. It was decided that this line must be held firmly and with full force. The line of attack of the Indian offensive apparently centred itself in that direction. The main achievement was that the enemy Armoured Division was not allowed to develop any momentum of their attack. The spirited fight and defiance displayed by our own armour on the ground, comprising Guides Cavalry, 19 Lancers and 25 Cavalry, kept the enemy armoured columns engaged in the fierce tank to tank battle and held at bay. These efforts were supported by the aerial observers, who kept all the movements of enemy columns under their vigil, and whenever they would present a vulnerable target, it was brought under the full pounding of all the guns available. Every time they tried to develop any manoeuvre, they suffered the wrath of all the artillery guns within range. Under the intense fire of our guns, enemy tanks would disperse and bury themselves in the mud houses for their camouflage. The same practice would follow whenever our Air Force pounded them. In this, the ACT sets carried in the L- 19 were proving to be very helpful. The aerial observers were most efficiently directing our aircraft onto the enemy tanks. Despite all the confusion of the intense battle on the ground, the close range engagements of our tanks, in tank-to-tank battle, there isn't a single case where our aircraft attacked any of our own tanks as of mistaken identity. This does reflect the professionalism of our air force pilots. But the Army Aviators did prove very useful in guiding our own pilots. The knowledge of the ground, the exact location of the enemy armour and the full familiarity of our positions significantly helped them in meeting this role.

Army Aviators attempted to keep the formations fully briefed about all details of the development of the battlefield on the ground. Regularly visits were made to all the formation Headquarters. Some liaison was made even at the unit level, though the frequencies of visits at that level were not as much as was desirable efforts were made to keep everyone informed.

A very significant event happened on September 14, 1965. I had sent Captain Niazi to Zafarwal Sector, which came under attack in the early hours of the 13th of September. It was expected that the enemy may mount another attack in that area. Captain Niazi was told to keep a watchful eye. The pilot was gone for nearly four hours, nearly exhausting the endurance of the aircraft. This was causing a lot of anxiety at Adamke Strip. Suddenly the L-19 appeared, and everyone felt very relieved. I was very upset with the pilot for having pushed his luck with the endurance of the aircraft. When questioned truly to his style, Captain Niazi started describing the details of the sortie. As always in his own innocent style, he explained that while he was flying over Zafarwal; he saw no enemy activity in the area and so he got bored. He decided to travel north of our positions at Deg Nadi. The sun was rising from the east and by the time he had reached there, looking at some distance, he was noticing very flashy reflections of the rays of the sun. This was over a relatively large area. This greatly intrigued him, and he kept flying in that direction. He crossed the International Boundary, west of Deg Nadi. Getting nearer to these reflections, he saw a huge concentration of enemy vehicles, some four miles to the west of Samba. His estimate was some 2000-3000 vehicles. He further said that while returning, he had passed this information on the artillery net. This account evoked the attention of everyone present there. Gauging the importance of this news, I immediately flew to HQ 1 Corps. I conveyed this information directly to Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana, strongly suggesting to him he should personally himself call and request the Air Headquarters for an air strike. He did this very promptly. The Air Headquarters was reluctant to accept the authenticity of the news, but under insistence from the Corps Commander two fighter reconnaissance aircraft were sent. Arriving overhead, they confirmed this news. On the air, they requested for all available aircraft to be diverted for a strike in this area. The target was very lucrative and needed immediate attention. Our air force kept pounding them with all weapons available, including the napalm bombs, the whole of September 14,1965, including at night.

It was generally known towards the end of the night on the 14th of September that our air force had taken a hefty toll of the enemy concentrations in their locations to the west of Samba. The full implications of action came to be known only a few days later when some prisoners were captured from the area of Chawinda. They identified themselves as part of enemy's 14 Division. The description of the attack of our Air Force as given by them, on their concentration area near Samba and the poundings received on the afternoon and night of the 14th of September was very graphic and telling. They narrated the extent of destruction caused to them by our Air Force. This important re- enforcement of the enemy 14 Division, whose arrival in the area had already been delayed, had now ceased to effectively exist as a formation. In all the operations after the 14th of September, this formation saw only a piecemeal employment. They had no independent or any critical role assigned to them. The state of their morale was very low. The pounding that they had received had left them dazed. Indian 14 Infantry Division was so badly decimated that they ceased to exist as a fighting formation.

The operational orders captured from the enemy tank of 16 Cavalry on the evening of the 8th of September, gave full details of the concentration of forces and their plan of attack in the Sialkot sector. The task given to 14 Infantry Division was, "If in position will capture Zafarwal by the 8th of September and after that, advance to Chawinda to take over from 1 Armoured Division." This formation did not take part in the operation on September 8 as their arrival was delayed. The operational order of enemy 1 Armoured Brigade OO No.3 captured later, also does not mention their 14 Infantry Division (Annexure 17). The prisoners belonging to this formation who were captured around September 17/18, 1965, in the Chawinda area[21], completed this missing link and clue. What happened to the 14 Infantry Division? The details are already covered and now fully fitted in the description.

From the captured enemy Armoured Brigade OO No. 3, which was signed on September 13,1965, at 1315 Hours, the main attack of the Indian Armoured Division was planned to be launched sometime on or after the 14th of September. Attached as Annexure-17[22]. Events on the ground confirm the same. It is clear that the attack did not proceed as planned. The fierce tank battles started from September 15, 1965, onwards. The climax was on the 16th of September. From the air, the Army Aviators operating in the area, from dawn to dusk, had a very clear bird's-eye view of the battlefield. This was all being reported very promptly and professionally to all the Headuarters. The enemy armoured formations could not develop the momentum of their attack. No doubt, our own tanks had played the central role. The fight put up by our own tank crews blunted a determined enemy attack. This battle was very ably assisted by the Army Aviators. The effective concentration of all available guns, on the attacking enemy armour columns, was both pinching and hurting to them. This, coupled with the accurate direction of our own Airforce through the ACT sets in the aircraft, highlighted the humble contribution that the unarmed L-19 aircraft made. The effects were telling. From the early morning of the 16th of September, the L-19 planes were observing the three key enemy columns of attack. One column was directed towards Chawinda, the centre column was making its thrust between Chawinda and Rakh Baba Bhuhre Shah and the third enemy column was leading its attack towards Badiana. Army Aviators kept regularly informing the details of this operation to all the relevant formations and units. I kept the area under observation since first light and estimated the strength of the enemy along each axis as one armoured regiment. During the visits to 15 Division and 6 Armoured Division, I apprised the GOC's of the direction and the strength of the enemy attack. In my estimation and one which I had communicated to the GOC 6 Armoured Division, this was, supposedly, a full-fledged attack by the enemy Armoured Division. This estimation was endorsed by the GOC, and, later proved to be correct. The seriousness of this determined enemy major offensive was vividly emphasized to all I briefed. On the ground too, as the pressure of the chief enemy armoured thrust built, it was fully realised that this was the most critical moment of the battle in this sector. But this time we were fully ready and prepared for it.

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[21] In the operational orders recovered from the Indian tank, 14 Division was to attack and capture Zafarwal on September 8th. The Indian prisoners of this Division were captured on the night of 18th/19th September and they gave all the details of what happened to this Division. Here I have given those and I say that it was the missing 14 Division.

[22] Annexure -17 Operational Order 1 Armoured Brigade 13th September, 1965 is given in Annexures.

On the evening of September 16, 1965, I went to HQ 1 Corps. While I was briefing Commander 1 Corps, Lieutenant General Rana and Major General Yaqub, the Deputy Corps Commander, on the details of this main enemy attack, a query was raised. I was asked about the troops we had on the ground specifically opposing against each of these columns. I was again shocked and was in total disbelief! The battle had raged in the area since the 8th of September, and even now, 8 days into the war, they did not have any clue about the dispositions of our own troops. It was maddening to realise that Corps HQ, till now had no proper channels of information and efficient communication links with its formations. Leave alone that, it was also clear, that there was no system of collection and assessment of battlefield intelligence at the levels of Corps HQ. I had expected nothing better from Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana, but I believed that Major General Yaqub had much better professional acumen. He was an armour officer, was till recently the commandant at the Command and Staff College, Quetta, had seen the battle in Africa in World War- II and was considered an excellent professional officer. It later proved his competence was of rather theoretic and academic nature and had little command experience. I was disappointed in him. I explained to them that 25 Cavalry was at Chawinda, Guides Cavalry was between Chawinda and Rakh Baba Bhuhre Shah, and 19 Lancers was in the area of Badiana. On hearing this, Major General Yaqub very confidently remarked that if there is a regiment of ours against a regiment of the enemy, there would be no breakthrough. Sharing this realistic and reasonable appraisal of the situation, as it obtained on the evening of September 16, 1965, I inquired if we had any plans of our own. The response I received was in the affirmative; counter offensive plans were being planned. Colonel Farman Ali (Later Major General) was acting as Colonel GS, and he was handling this task. In my meeting with him, he did explain that he was working on different options.

On the morning of September 17, 1965, the L-19 aircraft flying in the area clearly could observe that the heat and the ferocity of the battle that had raged and developed throughout the previous day, had died down very considerably. I visited HQ 6 Armoured Division in the early morning of the same day. I met with GOC, Major General Abrar, as per the routine. The feeling of the grimness that the battle had brought with it had changed, and there was a relative calmness prevailing. The beaming faces of the GOC and the staff said it all. The GOC explained that in his opinion the most severe enemy attack had been blunted. The enemy had suffered massive tank casualties. Our own tank losses were also high, but much less than compared to the enemy. GOC 6 Armoured Division had the habit of monitoring the enemy Armoured Division's wireless net. He mentioned that early in the morning; he had heard a blanket call on that net. It was just addressing all the tanks, which had survived the bitter tank action from the 16th of September, to withdraw individually taking cover in sugarcane crops. The enemy 1 Armoured Division had ceased to exist as a formation and even sub-formations. The gravity of the bitter truth had dawned on them. The seriousness of the situation demanded the extrication of the tanks, who had survived the previous day's intense tank battle, and thus these panicky orders. GOC 6 Armoured Division was equally seized with the situation. He started forming up some counter-offensive plans in his mind. His own capability was also rather limited, as his units were on much-depleted tank strengths because of the prolonged battles. At this stage, Major General Abrar was firmly of the opinion that he could undertake only limited counter-attack plans. He felt that any major initiative could come only at the level of HQ 1 Corps.

Seeing the situation, I flew to HQ 1 Corps. In my briefing, all the details of the accounts as perceived by the Army Aviators and my assessment were conveyed. The might of the Indian Army had been completely mauled down. I also conveyed the views of General Abrar, in that he felt that he could only carry out limited offensive and that any major counterattack plan could come only at the level of the Corps. They had the newly regrouped 1 Armoured Division and 18 Infantry Division available to them in the area. It was very strongly suggested to them that they must firm up their own counterattack plans. Both the Corps Commander and the Deputy Corps Commander were clearly in agreement. They said that they were working on those. Colonel Farman Ali was also present, as he had been earlier tasked to complete different options and plans. I suggested to General Yaqub that he should fly out with me to the area to have a close look at the battlefield to make his own mind and plans. It would give him a bird's-eye view as on a sand model. In reply, he said, "There is no need for that. You have given a comprehensive briefing, and I have a rational idea now." Colonel Farman later flew in a helicopter, with Captain (Later Brigadier) Ali Jawahar, the pilot, to have a detailed look and carry out the required recce to finalise the different possible plans of counterattack.

I flew back to HQ 6 Armoured Division in the afternoon of September 17. As I arrived there, General Abrar was very pleased to see me. This he always was. It was so because he was expectantly waiting for all the latest news of the battlefield. This time, without waiting for any briefing from me, he congratulated me. He told me that the enemy had paid the best compliment to the Army Aviators. He said that while monitoring the Indian Armoured Division net, he just heard a call for close air support. The targets being mentioned specifically for their Air Force were Patton Tanks and L-19 Aircraft. It was very flattering. Over the last 10 days of battle, the enemy was clearly explaining its frustrations. The lethality of the Patton tanks was being equated with the effectiveness of the support that the L-19's were providing. The Army Aviator had undoubtedly played a role. The accurate and timely adjustments of the artillery fire support by the Air OP.had made its pinch felt on the enemy. So equally was the devastating effect of the direction of our aircraft attack through the airborne ACT in the L-19 aircraft. To this openly manifested performance, the enemy minds must also had perceived the vital role of providing the true and graphic description of the real-time view of the battlefield by the Army Aviators. The pivotal role played by Army Aviation had been clearly driven home in the enemy's mind and hence their reaction.

Sure enough, when the Indian Air Force came in close support; they started targeting the Patton tanks and L-19 Aircraft. Out of all the fixed wing planes and helicopters flying in the area, they picked up Captain Niazi's aircraft. Along with Captain Akhtar Mahmud, he was on a mission with their ACT set, to direct our own Air Force to their relevant targets being picked by the Army Aviators. They were flying a little higher than the other aircraft and helicopters in the area. Having spotted this plane, the attacking aircraft dived towards him and opened up with all his guns.

The bullets went through all the length of its fuselage and hit it at several places. Luckily, no injury was caused to the pilot and the crew manning the ACT set. His rudder control was damaged. The aileron too was hit, and it was only partially functional. I was also in the air at that time, and when I heard this account of the attack and damage on the wireless, I told Captain Niazi to proceed to Sialkot strip and land there, since it was bigger and had more space available for his forced and uncontrolled landing. I too followed him there. The aircraft crash landed at the old polo ground. Since it did not have much directional control, it swerved and swung on landing and was severely damaged. But the pilot, Captain Niazi and the rear observer, Captain Akhtar Mahmud, manning the ACT, were both safe.

The storm that had gathered since September 8, 1965, with the launching of the Indian attack on Pakistan, had peaked itself and attained its maximum intensity on the 15th and 16th of September. This was weathered so bravely on the ground. Barring a few fiascoes‘s at Jassar Bridge, the relief in line operations of 24 Brigade Group at Phillaurah by 11 Cavalry and 9 FF during night of the 10th of September, the drama and the confusion at Zafarwal; the performance of the units was most commendable and admirable. It was an overall team effort. The tanks, the infantry and the guns had all played their part with utmost devotion, fierceness and utmost bravery. Our Air Force had provided the ground troops with excellent support and kept the skies relatively clear of enemy aircraft intruding in for attacks. In this, the Army Aviation had too thoroughly blended itself and played their part equally well. Informed judgment and the crucial events all bear testimony to this. The key observation was that so far we only kept reacting to the enemy moves and his attack plan. We met all thrusts and advance of the enemy frontally. In the tank battles, we made no classic use of the mobility of the armour and kept plugging it frontally. The classic manoeuvre of 25 Cavalry on the 8th of September, which was also developed accidentally and rather as a part of any plan, was all forgotten and never imbibed in all subsequent actions. It was a pity, but brought out the lack of adequate experience of handling armoured formations at our higher echelons of command.

The bird’s-eye view of the battlefield that the Army Aviators had the benefit of having, coupled with the focused attention and general information about how the battles had gone so far; had clearly and strongly suggested that it was the time that we plan our own attack to wrest the initiative from the enemy. These views were strongly recommended by the Army Aviators, during all visits and meetings at different headquarters. 15 Division and 6 Armoured Division had remained too deeply committed and embroiled in an intense battle with the enemy formations. They did not have the capability at their levels for any significant initiative. This had to come at the level of the Corps HQ.

This description of the situation as it permeated till the morning of September 17, 1965, is crucial. On this day not only had the storm died out, but a very grim situation developed for the enemy forces that had made their limited penetration. The enemy had amassed 3 Infantry Divisions; namely 6 Mountain Division, 26 and 14 Division plus their pride, the 1 Armoured Division. They secured the firm base and launched their attack on the 8th of September. By the morning of September 17, 1965, they could only make small inroads. The maximum penetration made was when Butur Dograndi was captured by the leading tanks of 17 Horse. The full weight of this momentum of all these formations put together, gained a depth of 10-12 Miles only. This was blunted and petered out by the evening of September 16, when the Indian attack had made its most determined push. This attack was coming along three separate axes and had the enemy 17 Horse in the lead along the central axis. It was bravely being led by Lieutenant Colonel Ardeshir Burzorji Tarapore. To further encourage him, he was continually coaxed and egged on by repeated messages on the Indian 1 Armoured Division net. These messages were actively exhorting him to advance fearlessly. He had been referred to as Tiger. The repeated message was, "Tiger, you capture Milestone 5, and Param Vir Chakra will be on your feet." This was the most determined attack. But it was equally being met by even more committed and determined troops on the ground. The leading tank of the CO had by passed Buttur Dograndi and was gradually proceeding towards Milestone 5 on Chawinda- Pasrur Road. He came so close and yet so far. At this stage, his tank was hit and destroyed. Lieutenant Colonel Tarapore was injured. Indian accounts suggest that he was killed later when a shell landed near him as he was having some tea in the open. He did receive Param Vir Chakra, but it had to be a posthumous award. The credit for this successful knocking out of the tank was being claimed by all three units in the area. It was the gun position of 1 SP Artillery Regiment, and the second-in- command Major Rashid was bravely handling this situation by resorting to direct firing of the guns on the advancing enemy armour. He was awarded Sitara-eJurrat for this brave action. The unit was laying the claim that the tank was destroyed by their direct engagement. 3 FF was also in the area and was busy in blazing away their recoilless rifles at these oncoming enemy tanks. They too maintained that it was their fire that hit this doomed tank. And this also was the claim of 25 Cavalry who were battling this advancing armour column during the entire days fighting. Regardless, as to where the credit lay, the outstanding achievement was that all the troops had held their positions bravely. They had fought with utmost courage the whole day and had denied the enemy the capture of their prized objective. Incidentally, 3 FF had earlier borne the initial brunt of the Indian attack on the September 8, and having been routed still had the determination to form into a Battalion again and take their place back at the Phillarauh- Gadgor defensive complex by the same evening and fought there bravely all along till relieved. And again in their new location at Chawinda, the fate had them again brave the brunt of the main enemy attack on September 16 and later their final Infantary attack on the September 18, where even hand to hand battle took place; they did it manfully, with utmost valour and overall was a magnificent performance. The credit for this would go to their CO, Lieutenant Colonel Siddique, and the officers and men under his command. Despite the high casualties suffered, they never wilted under attack and gave a most commendable account of their courage and fighting qualities. This feat must be recorded and acknowledged.

The horizons had cleared from the 17th of September onwards. The push so made by the enemy was clearly proving very vulnerable. The advance had been blunted and brought to a grinding halt, and its flanks were now open to our further counter attacks. The most significant transformation was in the mind of General Abrar Hussain. He gave orders on the night of the 17th of September, for a limited offensive on the 18th September. The area up to Jessoran was cleared.

Out of sheer desperation, Indians again launched their last attack on September 18. It was an infantry attack which was absolutely mauled. Where their tanks with full support of Infantry had failed in the severe fighting on 16th and 18th September, how they hoped that the Infantry attack alone will succeed is beyond all description? It was a suicidal attack and reflects the insane minds of some of their Commanders! The next morning saw hundreds of dead bodies littering the place. The remaining were captured. To provide the much-needed guts to the attacking Indian Troops, they had been given generous stocks of Rum. Some soldiers were drunk, and many others were still carrying their stocks on them.

The critical level of Command which could take a bolder and decisive action was HQ 1 Corps. Some units of our 1 Armoured Division, which had arrived earlier from Khem Kharan sector, were made part of a regrouped 1 Armoured Division and was at Pasrur. Major General Yaqub was placed in Command. Another Infantry Division, 18 Division, under the command of Major General Nasir, was also positioned in the area for this planned counterattack. Some operational plans were being chalked out by Colonel Farman Ali. Again, the advice of Army Aviation was a valuable input in these plans. While the enemy had made a small advance and a bulge up to Chawinda, we were holding a firm base at Zafarwal. This had rendered the Left enemy flank very vulnerable to any attack from the direction of Deg Nadi, near Zafarwal. Army Aviators while flying around were clearly viewing this typical sand model description and fully projecting this in all the routine visits and briefings to HQ 1 Corps. The enemy was desperately trying to disengage and extricate its remnants of the Armoured Formations from this area. The tanks had been given the orders to withdraw individually, taking cover in Sugar Cane crops. The Army Aviators emphasised that the time to counterattack was now; any delay and time wasted will enable the enemy to extricate himself and regroup. This was the advice and the message. Colonel Farman Ali, Colonel GS, 1 Corps, made several plans.

The plan that was formally approved was given the Code Name of "Operation Wind Up." Major General (Retd) Farman Ali had confirmed this to me only a few years ago and had promised to give me a copy of that. But unfortunately, he expired. Why it was never executed was a mystery, then and remains so to-day.

Brigadier Z.A. Khan in his book, "The Way It Was," some years later and through hindsight, writes in his book, "1 Corps now with 1 Armoured Division, less 5 Armoured Brigade, under its command, planned to recapture Phillaurah, Chobara and Maharajke. No plan to cut the Pathankot-Samba-Jammu road by advancing North from Zafarwal was made, which would have the same effect as the capture of Akhnur." Was not this being advocated by the Army Aviators after the events of on the 17th of September and beyond? A cease-fire came on the 23rd of September, but our plan of counteroffensive was not executed. No one has explained any reasons for this. One has heard some muffled excuses; shortage of ammunition is being mentioned as one of those. None of the unit Commanders in the area ever suggested so. Was it due to some serious failings of the qualities of head and heart at some critical levels of Command? Or was there any other compelling circumstances? At least no one in operations was aware of it. I will summarize on this in conclusion. The Army Aviation was fully integrated with the operations of 12 Division, 7 Division, 15 Division, 6 Armoured Division and HQ 1 Corps. It is unfortunate that no attempt was made to provide the same level of support and integration of the Army Aviation effort in the Lahore and Kasur Sectors and above all the main strike force. Only a limited support was provided, but it never got fully integrated. There is no plausible explanation that justifies not having eyes in the sky when you plan to launch a major offensive in Khem Kharan, especially when you consider that Command and Control through ground channels could become problematic. In the earlier planning, when 7 Division with 1 Armoured Division under command, were to be launched as the principal strike force; to ensure the success of this thrust, bring about coordination in command and through that keep the momentum of attack, my Squadron was placed under their command. We carried out all the required liaison and limited reconnaissance. We were entirely committed to this force. We remained deployed in May/June at Balloki and waited in the wings for the force to be launched. Before the time came for the launching of this formidable force, it was split. The question is why? Why was the launching of the 1 Armoured Division, which was the major thrust, undertaken through ambiguous arrangements of a coordinated effort with 11 Division in Kasur area? This remains a mystery too!

# CHAPTER 10

# KHEM KHARAN SECTOR AND CONCLUSION

I have earlier given some background of the planning and preparations done for the offensive plans of Pakistan Army. The Commander of this strike force, Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir, which composed of 7 Division with 1 Armoured Division under command, had prepared in meticulous details all his plans and options. The reason this force was split, and the Commander posted out to Ankara has a big question mark around it? It was an invitation for disaster and this had been eminent, and yet we launched our most important offensive in the Khem Kharan Sector on the 8th of September, in the most haphazard manner under the command of an incompetent, unprofessional and ill-suited GOC, Major General Nasir. His appointment to Command is a riddle hard to justify! Since I did not myself take part in this operation, I have to rely on some other first-hand accounts of some other officers who did.

To cover the operation of Khem Kharan, I have incorporated the firsthand account of Captain (Later Brigadier) Mokeet who took part in that sector during the 1965 War.

“Memoirs of 1965”

Brigadier (Retd) Mian Mahmud has a special place in my life as the instructor who taught me how to fly an L-19 in 1959 and guided me during my initial stay in Aviation. I can never forget his charismatic personality and sound advice, which helped me to be accepted as the first non-Artillery Officer in Army Aviation.

A few days back he informed me he had written his memoirs of 1965 war and wanted me to contribute my personal account of that war. My best efforts to wriggle out of this assignment were in vain. I informed him I have never kept a diary in my life nor have any written document to take help from as now at 79 years; I find it even difficult to remember where I have put my pipe and tobacco. But to fulfill his desire, I agreed to pen as much as I could remember off-hand. I cannot support what I write with any documents, sketches or diagrams and precise dates and timings may be little out, but every event is my personal experience.

Brigadier (Retd) Mahmud gladly accepted my plea, as he wanted to include first- hand account of the events.

March 1964 - I was a flying instructor posted to Army Aviation School Dhamial. Lieutenant Colonel P.J Baker, one of the finest officers that I have served under, was school commandant. He called me over and handed me my posting order as a signal from the MS branch which read: "PA 5199 - Captain Abdul Mokeet Khan, on compassionate grounds, posted to 15 Lancers, Lahore. The officer will not claim for change of address as on completion of 2 years he will revert to 13 Lancers." Within a matter of 15 minutes, I was handed over my posting and move order. I hurriedly left Rawalpindi for Lahore to look after my ailing parents who were admitted in hospital for the previous one year. Next morning in Lahore I reported to the RHQ (Regimental Headquarters) 15 Lancers, the Corps Recce Regt (Corps Reconnaissance Regiment) and Lieutenant Colonel Sadiq Awan, CO 15 Lancers, welcomed me to the regiment. Colonel Awan ordered me to take over as Technical Officer of the regiment. The army was passing through a transitory phase of adopting a new maintenance system of SMT and CMT (Squadron Maintenance Team and Central Maintenance Team). I took over the responsibility, and by the grace of God, the regiment got an outstanding report in the July Annual Technical Inspection. Remaining regiments of the Corps were instructed to follow the pattern of maintenance established by 15 Lancers.

Within 3 months Lieutenant Colonel Sadiq Awan was posted out, and Lieutenant Colonel Bashir Ahmed ex Guide cavalry took over as the new CO. He was subsequently posted out and Lieutenant Colonel (Later Major General) Sikander-ul- Karim became the next CO. Meanwhile I was appointed as 2 I/C B squadron which was under the command of Major (Later Brigadier) Akram Hussain Syed.

On September 5, 1965, the regiment was in its peacetime location with First Line ammunition stacked next to each tank. Since there were no orders to open the first line of ammunition, I on my own took the initiative and ordered the opening, de- greasing and storing the ammunition in the tanks. Soon, other squadrons followed suit.

We had completed the task just before dawn on September 6, 1965, when we received the news that Indian Army had attacked Pakistan along the international borders. In Lahore Sector, they attacked through Wagha and advanced up to Batapur. The regiment was ordered to move to battle locations immediately. Alpha Squadron commanded by Major (Later Lieutenant Colonel) Aziz-ur-Rehman with Captain Malik Amin as his 2 I/C moved to 106 Brigade positions from Bedian alongside BRB Canal.

B Squadron - 15 Lancers under the command of Major Akram Syed reached the outskirts of Kasur and came under sporadic artillery fire from the enemy side. Right then, two Indian aircraft bombed eastern side of

Kasur and continued towards Ferozepur. As our squadron reached the District Courts area, we came under heavy artillery fire. We turned left along Kasur-Khem Kharan road and found the entire route choked with all sorts of A & B vehicles. I pushed my way through to discover the hindrance and reached the bridge over BRB. I saw that the bridge was closed by the MP JCO who thought that the bridge was not safe for crossing as Major Utrra's tank (Squadron Commander 6 Lancer) had fallen over the bridge. I walked over the bridge to the site where the tank had fallen into BRB and saw it lying in the water. However, I saw that the bridge was not damaged and came back towards the MP JCO and told him to remove the barrier as we would take our squadron over the bridge. Right at that very moment, I saw an L-19 pass over our head and Major Masoom (later Lieutenant Colonel also Aviation) standing on the roadside, raised his arms and beat his chest. Only I could understand the frustration of Major Masoom who was accompanying his battery. I crossed over the bridge with our squadron with no mishap, and this action of mine encouraged the stranded formations to follow suit.

As I reached Rohi Nala, I climbed up the slopes to the bridging site where I met Lieutenant Colonel Sahibzad Gul, CO 6 Lancers, and Lieutenant Colonel Altaf - commander of the engineer battalion. To my amazement and horror, I found that only class 50 Treadway bridge constructed for the armoured division was blocked by a 6 Lancer tank which had stopped because of lack of fuel and steep climb. The so-called Bridgehead established by 2 FF CO Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Fateh Khan was about approximately 300 yards along Rohi Nala with its depth of only 600 yards. The bridging site was under direct enemy fire from both sides, with heavy machine guns on the eastern bank of Rohi Nala. At this moment Lieutenant Colonel Sahibzad Gul realised the vulnerable condition that we were in and was of the opinion that the enemy would counter attack and throw this bridgehead back into Rohi Nala unless we act and enlarge the bridgehead. He planned to take as many runner tanks from the Bridgehead and rifle troops. He asked me to find out if we could get some other infantry support. With this force, he wanted to go along the eastern bank of Rohi Nala, shoot out the enemy on the banks and go past Kasur- Khem Kharan road across 1000 yards and make a left turn into the bridgehead.

I went to 1 FF which was nearby. Officiating CO, Major Shabbir was not available, but I met Captain Salahuddin Rana and apprised him of the situation and asked him to accompany us on this venture. He agreed. I came back to the bridging site informed Lieutenant Colonel Sahibzad Gul of the availability of my rifle troop and the company of 1 FF. He asked me to go over the bridgehead and find out how many tanks that we could rely on for this action. I met Captain Farhat Hasan- 6 Lancer squadron commander in the bridgehead and he told me that 6 tanks were available for this brief engagement. As I came back to the western bank of Rohi Nala and witnessed an unforgettable spectacle, I still remember till today. Three Indian Mystier aircraft coming from Kasur side at low level were engaged by hundreds of artillery guns both ack ack (Anti-Aircraft), and 50 Browning mounted on tanks, artillery units and engineer units. The sky became ablaze with tracers traveling in all directions. The leading Mystier pulled up but was riddled with bullets, and it was found among the wreckage in Mehndipur later on. The other two made a sharp turn towards the right and went to Ferozepur.

In the meantime, the bridgehead expansion was ready, and the small force comprising of 1 company of FF, 6 tanks from 6 Lancers and rifle troop of B squadron in dodges moved along the eastern bank of Rohi Nala and destroyed two companies of 9 Jammu & Kashmir battalion which were clinging along the banks. As we crossed Kasur- Khem Kharan road and made a right turn towards the custom post, we saw three up-gunned Sherman tanks with guns in travelling locks coming from Khem Kharan towards the bridgehead. The two Shermans in the front were destroyed by us, whereas the third one turned back towards Khem Kharan. Dozens of enemy soldiers were killed and 25 soldiers and 2 JCO's were captured. With all tanks and B vehicles intact, the force moved back into the bridgehead along with 27 POW's belonging to 9 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles.

During the night of 6th of September, many other units moved to the bridgehead. On the 7th of September, I was searching for Lieutenant Colonel Sherazi - CO, 7 Punjab when I witnessed an action that I can never forget for the rest of my lifetime.

Major Younis Alpha company commander was ordered to attack 2 companies of the Indian army which had crossed the Rohi Nala and were digging in area Rohiwal. At that moment Lieutenant Imtiaz Malik–FOO (Forward Observation Officer) 12 medium, requested for 15 minutes delay in the attack which was granted. He engaged the 2 companies of the enemy in Rohiwal by the regimental concentration of air burst on the enemy. The sky was ablaze as the shells were bursting above the enemy's head. Not a single enemy soldier was left standing. Subsequently, Major Younis walked over and captured the position without firing a single bullet. Over the night, the elements of armoured divisions moved into the bridgehead.

By the morning of 8th of September, enough forces were available to advance towards Khem Kharan and beyond. Major Akram Hussain Sayyed ordered me to hand over one troop of tank to Lieutenant Iftikhar, who had recently joined the squadron, and to man the rear link from CP (Command Post) as he wanted to keep the rear link to work efficiently, I did not agree and thought it would be unfair as Lieutenant Iftikhar had just come from the armour school and was not familiar with the operational area. I informed him that Risaldar Ghafoor was the most suitable man for working the rear link and assured him that nothing would go wrong and he agreed to my suggestion.

B Squadron 15 Lancers were leading, and 1 FF moved from bridgehead towards Khem Kharan on to Asal Uttar. As we moved out of the bridgehead along Kasur-Khem Kharan road, we found no opposition. I crossed the main Khem Kharan village from the right-hand side i.e., Tehsil HQ and went towards the railway station. At this point, I could see the tail of the last train leaving Khem Kharan. As I was going along the railway living quarters, I saw an old woman grey haired and dressed in white clothes coming in front of my tank. I stopped and got down. She requested me to take her to Amritsar as Khem Kharan had become a ghost town. I took the old lady to the nearest railway living quarters 100 yards away and requested her to stay here till the vehicles cross over as she may get killed. God knows what happened to her. The Indians had prepared their positions in Asal Uttar and were ready to receive us. As we neared Asal Uttar, we came under heavy fire from both sides. The advance came to a halt, and we are all pinned down. Until the evening we could not make any headway towards the enemy location. Just before last light when the shelling had stopped, 1 FF CO decided to move the regiment into leaguer for the night. The battalion with all its vehicles kept going in a huge orchard left-hand side of the Asal Uttar road whereas B squadron moved back into area Punjab Armed Police (PAP) headquarter and leaguered for the night. This move of 1 FF was probably observed by the Indian FO who did not fire a single shell but at midnight bombarded the entire orchard into smithereens. Not a single vehicle moved out of the orchard. B squadron was also subjected to intensive shelling by Indian Corps artillery but survived without any casualty. We were lucky to receive our first cooked meal. Risaldar Sher Khan - Senior JCO 15 Lancer managed to get through the impassable traffic jam on class 9 bridge over the Rohi Nala. This was made possible by the only Crossing Control Organization that 11 division could muster consisting of Lieutenant

Colonel (Later Major General) Sikandarul Karim CO 15 Lancer and Major (Later Lieutenant General) Ijaz Azeem, 2 I/C 15 Lancer. Both of them pulled out their pistols and threatened the drivers of every vehicle of dire consequences if they did not behave correctly. This effort of theirs paid its dividends and traffic over class 9 bridge started trickling across. The priority was given to food and langar vehicles followed by arms & ammunition vehicles as the troops had not eaten for the last three days. Risaldar Sher Khan informed me about the Indian guerrilla force attacking the B Echelon area in Kasur. The whole night through, a gun battle took place. In the morning we found out that not a single person was hit, but not single equipment was left without bullet holes. The Indian guerrilla scare was very dampening, especially in the rear area where our troops fired at each other, mistaking them for Indian guerrillas.

The same day 6 Lancer had reached Valtoha and asked for replenishment but because of lack of supplies were ordered to return to the vicinity of Khem Kharan and leaguer (taken from German word Lagar-an encampment for tanks) there. During the night, the enemy also subjected them to artillery fire but could not cause any significant damage.

On the 9th of September, 6 Lancer was ordered to again capture Valtoha and move up to Patti line and B Squadron was to protect its right flank along this move to Valtoha. B Squadron moved in the morning from the bridgehead and advanced along line Machikay, Ratokay, Gurdwara railway station and reached Kotli Wasawa Singh by midday when we heard the sad news that 6 Lancers were taken on by the enemy air and ground forces around Valtoha. Lieutenant Colonel Sahibzad Gul embraced shahadat, and the regiment was demoralised and started moving back. Tanks of 6 Lancers were stranded along the railway line of Valtoha- Khem Kharan, as the soldiers walked back to Khem Kharan. We also pulled back in the line of Gajjal- Ramowal and leagured there for the night.

Here, I learned that a possible encounter was avoided between B-Squadron (15 Lancer), commanded by Major Akram Sayyed, coming back from Kotli Wasawa Singh and B- Squadron (12 Cavalry), commanded by Major (Later Lieutenant General) Shah Rafi Alam, deployed in the area of Mehdipur, West of village Ramowal. Command vehicles of 15th Lancer and 12th Cavalry were standing next to each other in 11 Division Headquarter when Major Rafi Alam requested permission to take on enemy tanks coming towards them from East. Lieutenant Colonel Kareem who was in communication with B-Squadron (15 Lancer) overheard Major Rafi Alam Commander 12 Cavalry requesting permission to engage enemy tanks coming from East (near Rattokay Gurdwara Railway Station). Lieutenant Colonel Kareem realised the gravity of the situation and ordered Major Akram to stop immediately and went over to the command vehicle of 12 Cavalry and talked to Major Rafi Alam and told him he has ordered Major Akram to stop in its track and Major Rafi Alam confirmed that the advancing tanks have stopped, thus it was verified that they were B-Squadron (15 Lancer) tanks, so a major catastrophe was averted.

At night, I walked over to command vehicle 6 Lancer which was parked across the road where 2 I/C 6 lancers, Major I.B. Khan had ordered that no one will listen to the rear link where frantic messages from 5 Brigade were asking him to take over the command. He gave me a warm cup of tea, and as he was sharing his frustration, we heard an approaching vehicle in the night. As the car stopped, there was a brief argument followed by a Sten gun burst. I immediately stepped out of the vehicle to inquire and saw that a naik of Signal battalion had gunned down an Indian Sikh JCO. We also found his dodge with a horrified driver inside, who informed me he had come from Ambala with the Sikh JCO to replace the Artillery FOO in Khem Kharan. We apprehended the driver, and a party was sent to search for the Indian FOO also, but to no avail.

On the 10th of September, we were ordered to retrieve the tanks which were lying along the railway line. We could recover only 8 or 9 tanks as the rest were severely damaged/bogged. From there I moved towards Y junction on the Khem Kharan - Asal Uttar road where 5 FF was preparing its defensive position area from Y junction towards the railway line.

Standing on the roadside near kiln area ahead of Khem Kharan, I saw a Pakistan army jeep displaying a 2-star plate and GHQ flag. As it came closer, I recognised Major General Sher Bahadur, who stopped his vehicle and called me over. He inquired which unit I belonged to and what is happening in this area. Before I could answer, Lieutenant Colonel (Later Major General) Mumtaz of 5 FF came over and asked the CGS to accompany him to the battalion HQ for a briefing.

At Y junction I met Major Khadim ex-13 Lancer who was Quartermaster 24 Cavalry. He had come up with POL and ammunition vehicles to replenish 24 Cavalry Squadron which had captured village Cheema. I noticed that Major Khadim was wearing Peshawari chappal instead of ammunition boots and teased him he had forgotten the teachings of 13 Lancers so soon. He replied that he was suffering from athlete's foot. While we were busy talking, we saw four jeeps speeding towards village

Cheema with Brigadier Shami in the driver's seat and Brigadier Bashir sitting next to him. They were being followed by two escort jeeps with .30 Browning machine guns mounted on them. Moments later we saw the same escort jeeps speeding back towards Khem Kharan with the crews buckled down, and the guns were dangling on the mount. At once we realised that something had gone wrong. We started walking towards the 24 Cavalry position where Major Sami was trying to console Brigadier Bashir who was shouting for an APC. There we saw Brigadier Bashir along with his driver and operator who had crawled through the water channel to this area. I inquired from the operator about the whereabouts of Brigadier Shami.

He informed me that Brigadier Shami saw a stretcher bearer team of Indian Army looking for casualties in the field. He stopped the vehicle and called for the person in charge of the team, who instead pulled out his submachine gun from the shoulder and fired a complete volley of bullets. Brigadier Shami was hit and slumped in the seat whereas Brigadier Bashir along with his driver and operator jumped into the irrigation drain which saved their lives as they ran towards Khem Kharan. This all happened since Major Gardner had pulled out of Cheema when they were counterattacked by the Indian forces, whereas Brigadier Shami was unaware of this and ran into the enemy area.

I recall that a few months earlier, Lieutenant Colonel Khalil Ahmed Khan, CO 37 Corps Locating Regt, my brother-in-law had invited Brigadier Shami and Brigadier (Later Major General) Shaukat Reza to our place for dinner. During the discussion I mentioned that when I see red flags go up on firing ranges, it does not give me too much of confidence that we are ready for war, Brigadier Shami interjected that when they joined the war, it took them a few days to get in tune. I still maintained that confidence in self and the weapons was a prerequisite of excellent performance in war. The difference between performing the Indian stretcher- bearer and the escort team of our Brigadiers proved my fears.

After this episode, I left Major Khadim at the Y junction and went back to my squadron, which was across the railway line. The tank to my extreme left was in a position from where it could give effective flanking fire in front of 5 FF. When I reached the squadron, we came under intense artillery fire and strafing from the air. The enemy infantry attacked 5 FF supported by a troop of tanks. As the enemy attack was repulsed, I moved out towards Y junction Asal Uttar road in my jeep to assess the situation of 5 FF. At Y junction I saw a crushed 106 with one enemy tank brewing up 500 yards away from the jeep while another blown up tank about 200 yards away. A third tank had shot the 106 jeep at point blank range. While examining the crushed 106 jeep I noticed the same Peshawari chappal on the severed leg of Major Khadim who, along with Naik Gul Marjan, had just before their shahadat destroyed the two enemy tanks while the third one got them. Major Khadim was awarded Sitara-e- Jurat for his act of valour.

I went back to the squadron and told them to leaguer area Machikay for the night.

In the morning of September 12, 1965, we heard that the 1 Armoured Division had moved towards Sialkot taking all its units with them. GOC 11 Division had re- organized whatever units were left. 5 FF was deployed between Y junction Khem Kharan - Asal Uttar road and PAP headquarter. We did not go into leaguer but remained within the vicinity of Machikay with few tanks towards the north of railway line and a couple of them south of railway line near Machikay. The entire night we could not rest for a moment as the Indian artillery kept shelling our positions. By early hours of the morning, I went around the squadron to assess the damage, but by the grace of God there was not a single personnel casualty, nor any damage done to the equipment or vehicles. As I was walking towards Lieutenant Iftikhar,s tank, which was parked on the north of the railway line, 3 Sikh soldiers appeared from the tall grass around the railway line. Lieutenant Iftikhar pulled out his pistol and also shouted at them for hands up. Two of the leading soldiers dropped their wireless set and gun while the third one opened fire with this sten gun at Naib Risaldar Shahbaz, who was coming from the right and ran back towards the tall grass. To my horror, I found out that not a single person was on sentry duty as the entire tank crew & rifle troops were busy making tea or resting. I ordered the entire squadron to stand to and deployed the tanks and B vehicles in a semi- circle on either side of the railway line about 500 yards away from the crops and tall grass. Around midday, I was standing with Lieutenant Iftikhar when I heard a continuous fire of 30 Browning tracers over our head. These were coming from two tanks of the 6 Lancer in the kiln area behind PAP headquarter. The tank on my extreme right, which was in area Machikay with Dafadar Lal Khan, also opened fire in front of our line slightly above the crops. I was surprised what were they firing upon when I saw the entire crops area turn olive green because of the uniform of the Indian soldiers lining the entire length. They were stunned to see 10 tanks standing in front of them with 30 Browning's automatic fire going over their heads. I ordered

Dafadar Abid and his Rifle Troops to rush ahead and capture the Indian soldiers who had thrown down their weapons and raised their arms. Almost 150 soldiers including 6 officers were ordered to fall in 3's and march towards Khem Kharan. The company on the extreme left of this Indian battalion started running south. The 3rd SP regiment which was in area level crossing south-east of Khem Kharan, left their tanks and radars and ran after the Sikh soldiers trying to escape in the southern direction and brought back approximately 40 of them. Short of Khem Kharan, I handed over these POW to Major Akram and came back to collect arms & ammunition of this Sikh battalion which they had dropped in the fields. The ammunition, which included 120 rifles, 50 machine guns, 60 stens, 2 pistols, 2 x 3.5 rocket launchers, 2 x 30 Brownings and 4 x 2 mortars, was subsequently loaded in two dodges and sent to the Division Headquarter. Major Akram instead of taking the prisoners to the Division HQ, handed them over to Major Farooq - 6 Lancers for further disposal.

In the morning of September 13, Lieutenant Colonel Sikandarul Karim, CO 15 Lancer came to see us at PAP HQ area and was full of praise for the gallant action of Major Farooq, 6 Lancers for capturing Anant Singh battalion the previous day. I was astonished to hear this concocted story and called over Lieutenant Iftikhar to apprise the CO about the entire action of B squadron in capturing the Anand Singh Battalion the day before. Lieutenant Colonel Karim rushed back to 11 Division HQ and stopped them from sending the recommendation of SJ for Major Farooq, as his story was not true. The signal was stopped and Major Farooq missed his SJ.

On the 14th & 15th of September, the Indians tried to recapture Khem Kharan, but their attacks were repulsed. Meanwhile, B squadron cleared the entire area in the vicinity of Tattokay, Ramaowal, Chakwalian & Gujjal.

On 16th September 1965, Major Nazir - Commander C-Squadron (15 Lancers) along with Lieutenant Mazhar and his anti-tank troop, comprising 106 recoilless rifle and .30 Brownings joined us. A troop of M-47 from 6 Lancers had also come. This reinforced B- squadron 15 Lancer, which was deployed in area West of Rattokay Gurdwara railway station.

By the 18th of September, Major Akram Hussain Syed–Commander B Squadron was told by the CO to take some rest and Major Nazir–OC, C squadron was asked to look after B squadron in area Chakwalian.

From the 17th to 22nd of September, the Indian forces tried their utmost to recapture Khem Karan but failed as 11 Division and its elements stood their ground.

Finally, on September 23, 1965, a ceasefire was declared, and the hostilities ended.

A few days later, I was ordered to move our squadron to Kasur for meeting Brigadier R.G. Haider, who informed me that the Indians have a regiment of PT 76 in Ferozepur and are planning to cross river Sutlej and attack Pakistani forces in this sector. We were given a company of Rangers and told to deploy between Ganda Singhwala and Najawat which was occupied by a Punjab battalion. I took the squadron to Jot Singhwala where I met Sub Inspector Niazi who informed me that the company of Rangers is spread all over Kasur, Khuddian and Jot Singhwala. I ordered him to collect his company of Rangers within 24 hours and report to me in Jot Singhwala.

The area south of river Sutlej was under enemy control. The Indians had captured all the Pakistani posts along the border and were occupying them. We had lost our area of over 80 square miles to them. I collected all the Rangers and my rifle troops and crossed over near Attar Singhwala ferry and established a robust point and deployed all my force at this location. The next day, I saw an L-19 fly over our location. I contacted the pilot on arc 44 and told him I am Captain Mokeet and requested for the pilot's name. The pilot turned out to be Captain (Later Brigadier) Zaka, who was a student of mine. I asked him to land east of Jot Singhwala, where a long level field was available. He obliged by doing the needful. I drove out to the aircraft and got inTallto, the familiar rear seat of the L-19. We took off, and I took control of the plane. Flying at saroot (Tall grass) height level, I combed the entire area which had gone into the enemy's hand and noticed that the Indians had occupied all Pakistani rangers post along Indo-Pak border and cleared areas north of these posts. I came back and landed and thanked Captain Zaka for this favour. Now having a complete picture of the Indian forces as well as the area, I ordered my troops to advance to the edge of the saroot (Tall grass) and take a position between the old ranger's posts and then cleared up the area.

The Indians registered a ceasefire violation and asked for the UN team to help them to regain the area. I made sure that except for the Sub Inspector Niazi and the Rangers no one should be seen by the UN inspectors and told Niazi to inform them they cannot enter his location until the UN observers from Pakistan side are also present. I also told him to keep on insisting that they have made an occupation of this saroot (Tall Grass) line in front of the old posts from the beginning of the hostilities. This little action of ours was rewarded with a Tamgha Quaid-e-Azam for me and Tamgha-e-Jurrat for Sub Inspector Niazi.

The account of Brigadier Mokeet perhaps partially describes the fiasco of Khem Kharan. It covers only the limited action that he saw. But the reasons of this debacle run very deep. I have already mentioned the original plan of attack in this sector, where 7 Division with 1 Armoured Division under its Command were to launch this major offensive. This force had enough infantry support required for this operation. Why it was split and denuded of much essential needed infantry co-operation, is the major cause of the failure and is the question that no one has explained? The second aspect is the removal of Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir and his posting to Ankara. It was deliberate, and who in his judgment took this most stupid decision has never owned it. Should this not have been answered by someone! To crown everything, you keep a man of the caliber of Major General Nasir still in command of this important Division and you launch him on his own for this critical operation! You play with the fate of the Country, and yet you are oblivious of the consequences of these unwarranted decisions.

It does not end at that. Earlier, Major General Yahya Khan had made all the preparations for the defence of the Sialkot area. He had done the recce of the total area on foot, made a complete appreciation of different contingencies and had made all plans for the dispositions of his own troops and conceived all likely reactions and contingencies to meet any enemy threat. He was moved from 15 Division to take over 7 Division. He was replaced by a most incompetent and ill-suited Acting GOC, Brigadier Ismail. The joke about him was, that at an exercise when he was to give his plan, in his flowery English, he said, “That when my formation assumes offensive and embarks on our advance at full throttle, no one should stop me.” “It depends as to in which direction you are moving,” was the blunt response that he received. He was a stray maverick as a soldier. The question that arises is why he was inflicted as GOC 15 Division. Shortage of troops for “Operation Grand Slam” is cited as one reason. It is rather strange that you had all the time to plan, balance and correct all the deficiencies and yet you failed to do so. Is this not the vital question that our Higher Command should have answered? I have already earlier narrated the entire fiasco of posting out General Altaf Qadir to CENTO. Were these just mistakes or I may say blunders. All these reflected the grave failings at the level of Higher Command at

General Headquarters. In fact, more directly attributable to General Ayub Khan and his handpicked Commanderin-Chief, General Musa. He was chosen for his loyalty rather because of his professional capability. And when his tenure ends, he is given another extension. What comments can be offered? These were all part of our frustrations we had been experiencing.

Another one of the foolish decisions was how Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana was given the command of the only Corps that we had. No need to repeat the other illogical and even absurd decisions of placing inexperienced and incompetent Commanders at different levels of Command. Were these the acts of sincerity and loyalty, or else acts by General Ayub Khan only to perpetuate his own rule?

The irk, that these decisions attracted had clearly surfaced in the minds of all honest and sincere officer's. I can clearly recall the voices of strong dissent raised by Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir and many others, even before the war. But the events of 1965 war brought out the sins and the omissions of these decisions. Hurriedly, they strived to address and correct these willful blunders. They appointed Major General Yakub as Deputy Corps Commander, GOC 15 Division, Brigadier Ismail was replaced by Major General Tikka Khan. Brigadier Riaz-ul-Karim was dispatched as Deputy Division Commander, 6 Armored Division. He was hurriedly replaced by Brigadier Effendi after the fiasco of 11th September, 65, although he too met the same fate. Yet these worked only partially. Major General Tikka Khan stabilised the Sialkot Sector. Luckily, Major General Abrar stood on his own feet, rather than the crutches provided by the appointments of Deputy Division Commanders; but yet he was handicapped in his handling of the armoured formations. He had no background and experience of handling Armour.

What were the reasons and the motivating factor for these critical decisions? These were none other than the base desires of perpetuating their own rule and command. They needed men with such qualities of head and heart who could ensure that. Why is no reflection or even mention of this is made in the Diaries of Ayub Khan, and in the many other accounts that were written? Did they all have selective memories? Gohar Ayub is busy portraying with effusion, the skillful manipulations and orchestrated presentations, the illustrious background of his grandparents and the achievements of his father Field Marshal Ayub Khan. Why does he not throw light on the damages caused by all his ambitious deeds, his demeaning acts and omissions, and his penchant for self-glorification and perpetuation?

The list is long. But right now, I want to bring out his own conduct and behaviour. As a reservist, he was recalled to join the Army. His unit was deployed to defend the borders of Pakistan. He should have shown the will and resolve to join his comrades- in- Arms like many others did. But he preferred to sit in the lap of his father, in the comfort of the President's House, rather than take his place on the battlefield. He now claims great pride and honour in his service and association with the Army. I do not think the Army can share these thoughts. It was not the conduct of an honourable officer, but was a betrayal of the trust that Army had placed in him, and he stands condemned for that.

To conclude, the events of the 1965 War, one may summarise the command structure that General Ayub had given to this Army, was nothing short of treachery. The Generalship was hardly visible on the battlefield. The main redeeming aspect was the spirit, resolve, grit and determination of the Lieutenant Colonel's and others under his rank, who proved to be the backbone. Not only that, they blunted the attack of the Indian forces, but they also decimated and destroyed them to a level that we could and should have pursued the final act of concluding their defeat, at least in the Sialkot Sector.

We have been hearing many explanations and clarifications for not launching our Counter Attack plan at Chawinda. Air Marshal Nur Khan mentioned to me only a few years ago that General Musa had briefed them it was because of acute shortages of ammunition. This he said at the house of Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar. I had told him there and then that it was not true as far as my knowledge and assessment was concerned, and I had it later checked up by many other sources. In his "Memoirs" Lieutenant General Gul Hassan clearly states, "In the middle of the war, someone said that we were running short of ammunition. To verify this, I rang up the MGO! I was told that he had been sacked! Later the Ordnance Branch called me and assured me that our existing stocks would see us through, which was comforting." Major General Farman Ali had categorically told me, who was in the area, that there was no shortage. The account of 6 Armoured Division by Major General Abrar, in the book "Men of Steel" also omits it. In fact, he clearly describes all preparations and readiness for launching it. He equally was disappointed and dejected as it was called off.

In my meetings held at Corps HQ on the most regular basis, Major General Yakub kept repeating, "I am doing the detailed planning for it, as I do not want another Khem Karan fiasco." That is where his emphasis lies! No reference to any shortages is even suggested! What was the compulsion of General Musa that he, in his briefing to the other service Chief's, tells lies? One wonder!

This question of delay in the counterattack has been plaguing the mind of all of us. To my mind, it was all because of the ineptness and temerity of command, at Corps HQ's and at HQ 1 Armoured Division, whose command had now been given to Major General Yakub, for this vital task. We lost an excellent opportunity for inflicting a complete and total defeat on whatever was left of the Indian Army in the Sialkot Sector. We had 6 Armoured Division engaging them frontally and carrying out limited offensive operations within their capability and a reserve force of 1 Armored Division and 18 Infantry Division available at the level of Corps Headquarter for a major counter-attack. It could have been developed as a classic armour manoeuvre to cut the Indians at any point that we so chose!

In a more detailed explanation, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan in his memoirs ascribes it to his visit to HQ 1 Corps and HQ 1 Armoured Division on the September 15: where he seems to have decided to delay the counterattack by a few days. How and why he took that decision I cannot agree with this? Why I say so is that what inputs he got from Brigadier"s Riazul Karim and Moin-ud-din, when he met them at Divisional HQ? I can well visualize! It was all coming from minds of timid soldiers who were fishing for only excuses to delay the planned counterattack. General Gul Hassan should have made his own assessment and made his own judgment and conclusion rather than depend on their advice! This he does after interacting with some troops of this formation and states, "I met some of its men and they were still in a state of deadened sensibility and had not fully recovered from the traumatic experience in the Kasur-Khem Karan area." This again rather surprises me. I am even to-day wondering what fighting they had seen in that area that it had put them in such mental state and stupor. Some units had not fired even a single shot. As compared to this, the units in Sialkot sector had braved the attack of enemy full might for all these days with no break, and yet they were ready and engaged in limited counter attacks. This was a hasty and ill-informed assessment by the DMO. And despite all that, he only recommended a few day's delay, which the Chief accepted. The major battle took place on the September 16, in which the Indian Armoured Division was nearly decimated. The state of their panic was fully felt by all those in the actual battle. And it was sensed that time of our counter attack was there and then. The pulse of the battle was not fully gauged at GHQ is my obvious inference! But even then, the decision taken was only a few days' delay.

Why it was abandoned is beyond any reason and justification?

In his memoirs, Lieutenant General Harbachan Singh had the temerity to suggest:

"When the ceasefire came into effect, we had a distinct advantage over the enemy, and I have no doubt that if the hostilities had gone on, we would have certainly shown more worthwhile results, and Pakistan would have to eat humble pie!"

One can only marvel at this boastful statement being made! They launched the operation in this area with their full might of one Armoured Division, which was supported by Three Infantry Divisions. What troops did the Indians have left after the mauling that 1 Armoured Division had received on September 16, 1965, and the panicky order of general withdrawal by their tanks taking cover in sugarcane crops on the morning of the 17th of September, the complete massacre of their 6 Mountain Division after their adventurous attack on the night of September 18 and the ruthless pounding that their 14 Division received at the hands of PAF in Samba on the 14th of September? The back of the Indian strength was broken on the 16th of September, and whatever fighting capability was left was then totally crushed during the night of the 18th of September. They were put in a purely defensive role with no further offensive capability left. Our misfortune is that our Counterattack never materialized and we could not show them the light of the day about the ground realities.

Many criticised this decision of accepting the cease-fire without carrying out our Counterattack Plan, and they immediately retired some for them. Many more would have met the same fate, but for sanity ultimately prevailing. It was equally clear that the Indians will try to take revenge for their humiliation of war of 1965. It is best described by Lieutenant-General Akhtar Malik in the letter to his brother in which he says, "I have little doubt that the Indians will ever forgive us the slight of 65 and will avenge it at the first opportunity. I am certain they will hit us in E Pak, and we will need all we have to save ourselves." It proved to be prophetically accurate. I have endeavoured to describe the operation, most particularly in Chamb and Sialkot sector, based on what I saw from the air and the opinions of the commanders on the ground. I have tried to attempt to capture the spirit of the troops and the junior leadership on the ground, It is essential to identify where the credit is due and where serious mistakes have been made, both willful and unwittingly.

I commanded the Army Aviation effort in both the areas. It was my passionate involvement as an aviator, to tie in our humble efforts towards making the operations a success. It was in the proverbial role of unarmed into battle that we played our part. The boys gave their best! How far they earned their battlefield spurs, I cannot stand in judgment!

We served under 12 Division, 7 Division, 15 Division, 6 Armoured Division, and HQ 1 Corps. All had nothing but praise for the heroic role played by the Army Aviators. I was asked to initiate any citations for the gallantry awards. This was emphatically reinforced with the remarks that they would just blindly sign it and forward it to GHQ. Two citations for the award of SJ were initiated from 7 Division. My name was forwarded for an immediate award of SJ on the 3rd of September by General Yahya Khan. I initiated the citation for the award of SJ for Captain Khalid Saeed for his brave act on the 4th of September, when he neutralised the Indian gun position and Major General Yahya endorsed it fully. The awards ultimately granted were Tamgha-e-Quaid- Azam (TQA) to me and Imtiazi Sanad to Khalid Saeed.

Perhaps it was related to the intensity of the battles in the area and its importance that the Awards Committee attached. Major General Yahya Khan himself summed it up adequately. He said, “I think I write good English. Where were the purport and the intents lost, I do not know.” I told him it did not matter. It is important that the dedication and the gallantry of the boys were fully recognised. He then recounted the story of the award of Victoria Cross to Lieutenant (Later Lieutenant General) Bhagat during WW-II. Yahya and Bhagat were in the same Brigade in the African theater. Bhagat’s name was recommended by the Brigade Commander for the award of MC for the mine clearance operations that he had carried out. Sometimes later, they were all seated in the Brigade mess and were listening to the BBC. It was announced that Lieutenant Bhagat Singh had been awarded Victoria Cross for his brave deeds. Yahya Khan narrated, they were all taken aghast by the breaking of this news. Even Bhagat Singh could not believe it! Somewhere along the line of reporting, the citation had achieved a much higher connotation of this act of valour and gallantry. These are the vagaries and paradoxes of war. It did not matter to us. The chief thing is that everyone was fully cognizant of the contribution made by the Army Aviators.

The most intense battle was fought in the Sialkot Sector and in particular the area of responsibility of 6 Armoured Division. It is gratifying that the Army Aviation received the spontaneous adulation of all the troops, units and commands that we worked closely with. It can best be summed up by the description by GOC 6 Armoured Division, Major General Abrar Hussain, in his book, “Men of Steel”:

“No record of these crucial battles of Badiana-Chawinda, nor indeed of our other action, would be complete without special mention of the unfailing support provided to the forward troops by our Artillery, Army Aviation and the PAF.”

There could be no better compliments to the role of Army Aviation than to equate it with the lethality, efficiency and efficacy of the role played by our airmen and Artillery! We are most grateful for this. It was the best tribute that could be paid to us.

This is elaborated and further defined, “The Army Aviation pilots did invaluable work and defied all hazards not only to accurately direct artillery fire over terrain where ground observation was restricted but also flew reconnaissance missions continuously and reported enemy movements.” It is believed that Army Aviator Pilots had more than their share of the artillery shoots conducted. The direction of our Air Force strikes to the targets on the ground was also exclusively handled by pilots of Army Aviation. Many aircraft returned from their missions with the aircraft riddled with bullets. Luckily, we had no fatal casualties. It could only be described as the blessings of Allah.

The record goes on to explain, “The support from the PAF was unfailing, prompt and accurate. No praise can be too much for the courage and the fighting efficiency of our airmen-both PAF and Army.” Invariably and exclusively the strikes of our Air Force were guided by the Army Aviators from the ACT sets in the L-19 Aircraft. The accuracy reflected the skills of our PAF Pilots, but the guidance to the concerned targets stands testimony to the knowledge of the area, the precise information about the locations of the enemy and the daring of Army Aviators who guided them. There is not a single instance where our own Air Force hit any of our troops as a mistaken target. No wonder that on September 17, 1965, when the enemy was making drastic requests for the Air Support, the targets being given were Patton Tanks and L-19 Aircraft. The friends and foes, both were fully alive to the contribution of the unarmed blend of the soldier/pilot regime.

The war of 1965 reached its climax in the Sialkot Sector. It was a period of endless battles from the 8th of September until the time of ceasefire. The units fought fiercely and with a unique display of bravery. They knew the odds faced by them. These deeds got the unstinted and univocal admiration and adulation of all. This was entirely resonant in feelings and reminiscent in the gallantry awards bestowed. The highest decorated units were 3FF, 25 Cavalry and Guides Cavalry. Eight names were sent for the award of SJ from each of these units. 3FF received 6 SJ, Five of the gallant soldiers from each of these other units received SJ. A welldeserved tribute. It is equally flattering that four names of Army Aviators got recommended for the award of SJ and all four received this award. No questions were raised, and no queries were made. The Aviators fought alongside with their comrades on the ground, and they got a generous recognition of their efforts. The contribution made was the collective effort of the entire team of Army Aviators. Singling out any outstanding efforts of any one individual was difficult. The two names that stood out are those of Captain (later Major General) Hidayat Ullah Khan Niazi and Captain Khalid Saeed. I was happy that Niazi got his much-deserved SJ, but felt equally sorry that Khalid Saeed was only awarded Imtiazi Sanad.

When the ceasefire came, on September 23, 1965, I was sitting at the Squadron strip near Sambrial. In a pensive mood, I was reflecting on my thoughts of utter frustration and despondency over the events of the last 23 days of our battles.

What was echoing in my mind was that how the gallant deeds of our men and junior leadership, up to the level of Lieutenant Colonel, had been frittered away and bartered by our higher command? These thoughts I had equally, frankly and passionately shared with Major General Yahya Khan. This I had done on many visits that I made to his HQ, which was located just across the River Chenab, from our Squadron Strip at Sambrial. As mentioned earlier, he had summed up his personal reactions with the remarks, “We have failed to give this Army the Generalship that it deserved.”

As I described earlier, Lieutenant Colonel Zafar, flew in from Dhamial and stayed with me the whole day. Here, I got the chance to vent about my genuine feelings. These, as mentioned earlier, Zafar later narrated at a dinner the same night. These reached the ears of General Ayub Khan as his son-in-law, Amirzeb, who was also present there. The next day, Zafar was called to GHQ and orders for his compulsory retirement were given to him. On hearing this news, I decided to fly back to Dhamial to take a break from our 25 days hectic activities. To relax, we decided to play golf in the evening. As Zafar and I stood at the old tee No. 5, we saw General Ayub with his foursome coming along the fairway of Hole 6. As he saw us teeing off, he stood in the middle of the fairway, called Major General M. Rafi, his Military Secretary, and pointing his fingers towards us, he was giving some instructions to him. Of course, we could not hear, Zafar made only a reasonable guess. He said, “I suppose you will also be retired by this evening?” I was reminded of Brigadier Gul Hasan and what he had said earlier at Matanni. My feeling was the same, “I don’t give a damn!”

After we had finished our game, Zafar and I sat down to have a cup of tea on the lawns of the Golf Club. We saw General Ayub and his foursome also finish their round of golf. Major General M. Rafi, after seeing the President off, came over to our table and sat down to have a cup of tea with us. He was all smiles and being very nice to us. In fact, he complimented us for the role that the Army Aviation had played in the war. As he left, we were wondering the intent behind this lovely gesture! Perhaps the high command had some second thoughts on the rash decision of removing Zafar from the Army.

While completing the history of the role of the Army Aviation to supplement or augment the efforts on the ground, the description of the account itself should lend to pass its judgment. Were the Allah Air, Armour and Artillery of the AAAA’s assisted by the Army Aviator’s AA’s? Army Aviation does not want to lay any claims. The vital role that infantry played in some crucial battles of the Sialkot Sector must equally be recognised and given its own worthy place. We as Aviators need to do our own internal evaluation. There is a need to carry out a new assessment of the role that the Army Aviation could and needed to play. Having chartered that, we then need to harness and gear our efforts to achieve those goals.

The technology has changed a great deal since. For the Air Force, carpet bombing and its sheer weight, the daisy cutters, the cluster bombs, the proper application of this massive power unleashed by these new weapon systems and the use of electronics for engagements beyond even visual range in the aerial combat, have revolutionized its role. The real time battlefield picture, the airpower capability, the battlefield mobility and the overall blend of a professional soldier and a technocrat of a pilot in the Army Aviator, remains the core and the central to the role for Army Aviation. May they keep progressing in that direction! The flag of Army Aviation, I am sure, will keep flying high.

It is in this background that the Squadron was moved back to Dhamial after the cease-fire. All the frustrations had already piled up. To compound the matters further, this so-called glory of General Ayub’s rule in the country was waning away. His naked impositions of Martial Law, his butchery of the democracy through his ill- perceived and ill-conceived chain of electoral reforms were the sins clearly emerging in our minds. His worst offence being how he kept the most incompetent soldiers professionally in Command at different levels of critical echelons in the Army! All this was with a view only to keep himself in power.

## CHAPTER 11

## POST-1965 ERA PARTITION OF BANGLADESH & RISE AND FALL OF BHUTTO (1966-1977)

I was given the new assignment as Commander Army Aviation School. With this forum, I was associated from its infancy. The role played by the Army Aviation in 1965 war, and its most commendable performance, had earned the attraction and interest of most young and bright officers. We were getting a lot of volunteers, and this had plenty of officers to choose from. The aptitude test was our route to pick the best. One instance of our selection, I may bring out to illustrate both our frustrations and to our credit, the fairness of the system.

While going through the list of volunteers, I saw the name of Captain (Later Lieutenant General) Ali Kuli Khan. Immediately, it came to my mind that he was the brother-in-law of Gohar Ayub. I felt strongly that people with such background should not be allowed to be a part of our fraternity. It was my personal prejudice and frustrations that had piled up during the operations of 1965 War! The next day at the meeting with the instructors, I gave the explicit instructions that he should not pass the aptitude test and should be failed at it. It drew thunderous voices of dissent. I was being told if I realised who he was related to. My answer was obvious. It did not matter to me, and I firmly believed that such persons with this background should not be a part of our family. This news somehow got leaked to Captain Ali Kuli Khan, and he sent Lieutenant Colonel Ibrahim to me with a message. The plea was, "I should not be selected or rejected because of my relationship with people, but it should be on merits." It impressed me; the sincerity of the message touched me. The next day at the meeting with the instructors, I told them to give him a fair chance. He was selected and eventually graduated as a pilot and took his place in the ever enlarging community of Army Aviators. Here I would like to put on record my deep and most profound admiration for the way he conducted himself during his entire period of stay in the Army Aviation. His performance and attitude won the respect of all. He did himself and Army Aviation proud and became one of the worthiest of its members.

Life at the School went on as per the normal activities. The additional landmarks were that we started imparting Rotary Wing training to our fixed wing pilots. How one's ego is hurt can best be brought out by an incident that I still remember. In the regular meeting with the Instructors earlier in the morning, I said that any accident in which the instructor is on board the aircraft will be attributable to him rather than the student. Having said that a little later, I took a student by the name of Captain Muthair for his solo check flight. During the sortie, I found his flying not up to the mark and decided that he would not be allowed to go on for his solo flight. The student made the landing, and the aircraft came to a halt at the tarmac. I was fully vigilant all this time and had my hand and the feet at the controls. I asked him to taxi the aircraft back to the parking area and hoping that taxing will be no problem for him; I relaxed and left the controls. In a flash of a second, he pushed the full throttle forward and jammed his right foot on the brakes. Instantaneously, the aircraft while still pivoting on the right wheel took a sharp twist to the right. The force was so strong in that the robust right undercarriage of the rugged L-19 aircraft collapsed and the aircraft came to an abrupt halt as I pushed the throttle back, with its right wing resting on the ground. I was shocked and felt embarrassed that I could not prevent this accident. I asked Captain Muthair as to what did he do and he had no answer for this lapse, and I had no excuse for not being able to prevent it! As we walked back to the school, I felt most uncomfortable to see the instructors who were monitoring the solo flight test. I was wondering what they would think about this episode. I was reminded of what I had told them earlier at the meeting and had to accept full blame for the accident. Reflecting now, this was only the second accident that I had in my entire flying career spanning some twenty-five years.

It was in April 1966 that General Yahya Khan got promoted as the Commander-in-Chief. As discussed earlier, we were happy that he took over the Army, as the 8 years of General Musa in Command had kept the Army stagnant. He had no vision and was there only to loyally look after the interests of his benefactor, Field Marshal Ayub Khan. We hoped that this changeover of Command will usher a change. This hope was soon dashed as General Yahya started promoting the same people that we had criticised and even abused together. It did not stop there. When the demonstrations against President Ayub Khan began, rather than the holding of elections, transferring power to General Yahya Khan was made through recourse of Martial Law again. Ayub’s period of Pinnacle of Power was over.

May it be the hand of destiny or be it the idiosyncrasy or myopic vision of the political leadership in the country; the choice of the key appointment of Commander- in –Chief / Chief of the Army Staff of Pakistan Army has had a sign of exclamation around it! Equally ponderable is the weightage, and the authority given to this office or else assumed and acquired by the incumbent on his own. It makes a very interesting reading and needs synthetic and objective analysis. At the time of the transition of Command of Pakistan Army from the British General Gracey to a Pakistani incumbent, the choice made was, Major General Iftikhar Ahmad. He had the reputation of a professional soldier and a brilliant mind. The unfortunate and the untimely aircraft accident near Jangshahi, deprived the country of his services. Some other Generals also died in the same crash. They were also very reputable and outstanding names. This paved the way for the rise to power of Major General M. Ayub Khan. General Gracey had given him an excellent report while he was GOC in East Pakistan, where he hardly had any Troops under his Command. So, he became his choice, and this also washed off the adverse report that he had received while in command of a Battalion at the Burma front. He, with the help provided by Major (Later General) Musa, managed to save him from his Court Martial as ordered by Quaid-e-Azam. He had a very impressive and towering personality and this fitted in this new and most challenging assignment. He was immediately at ease and to his credit, started the process of building up the Pakistan Army, dexterously and with a rational mind and vision.

Then what went wrong? It was in 1951 that I watched him closely and intimately at the receptions in the Governor General's House at Karachi. Khwaja Nazim-ud- Din was a very modest person; devoted and one of the most sincere workers of Pakistan Movement. While some others and I were inclined to gather around and listen to his profound views, the vast majority of the gathering was seen cajoling around the towering figure of General Ayub Khan and singing his rhymes in the chorus and in full praise, "Sir, the destiny of this country is in your hands," was one of the more commonly used phrases. I was immediately alarmed at the political bankruptcy of the leadership of this country. My mind was wondering how long it will take Ayub Khan to actually start believing that he is the "Messiah" of Pakistan.

The political wrangling and squabbles had gone long enough to set in despondency and disappointment in the minds of the people. The ushering of the first Martial Law brought in a ray of hope in the hearts of the average person. He nourished the hope that maybe his lot will improve, and it may bring a change for the better in his miserable life. Even we in the Army were duped into thinking that perhaps Martial Law may prove the panacea for all our ills and tribulations. Strange was the stamp of approval by the Supreme Court of Pakistan under their judgment of Law of Necessity. The journalists, the politicians, the entire civil society were all were in full cohort and approval.

The one wise thing that General Ayub did was that he did not shake up the civil administration structure. He encouraged and supported them. He strengthened the position of the Federal Secretaries as per the Rules of Business. This encouraged efficiency, the officials accepted responsibility, and this helped in the smooth and efficient functioning of the Government. The result was a period of relative progress and development. But the wealth remained concentrated in the hands of twenty-two families only; with no trickle-down effect for the average person. In the initial period, the main mistakes that General Ayub made were the ill-advised EBDO, setting a pattern of allotment of lands in the Cantonment and the distribution of agricultural lands under the different Schemes to the senior officers of the Armed Forces and with some sprinkling for the other ranks. The worst came as he enjoyed a prolonged period of the rule with unlimited powers and authority. The greatest damage done was to the cause of Federation of Pakistan. The seeds of discontentment and feeling of deprivation grew in East Pakistan. This was fully exploited by forces that were not loyal to this country.

In the building up of the Armed Forces, he made a prized contribution. Soon after his imposition of Martial Law, he went to Turkey on route to an official visit to the USA. The well-equipped Turkish Armed Forces attracted his attention. He instantaneously developed the desire to equip the Armed Forces of Pakistan on the same pattern and lines; with weapon systems from America. On arrival in the USA, he expressed his desire to his hosts that he would like to see the Armed Forces of Pakistan develop on the lines of those of Turkey. It seems the American leadership was already keen to do that, as it suited their goals and objectives. It was a period of Cold War, and the Geo-Strategic Position of the region was the fulcrum to which Pakistan was the pivot. Pakistan fitted into their plans for the containment of the Soviet Union. They immediately agreed to equip five and a half Divisions of Pakistan Army with the American equipment. Likewise, they also agreed to modernise Pakistan Air Force and Navy. With this prompt and may be an unexpected response, General Ayub sat in deep thoughts holding his head with both hands.

The American counterparts were rather amazed and surprised at this strange posturing of General Ayub, and they queried him for a reason for this. As told by the Commander-in- Chief himself in an address to the officers in GHQ on his return; he said that my reply was, “I am now thinking and concerned how to sell this idea to my Generals.” This was the start of the debacle for him. His mind nurtured plans for an indefinite period of rule for himself. Without going into details, one needs only to highlight the salient, most ambitious and the key blunderings that both rocked him and derailed the path of the country.

Vice Admiral H.M.S. Chaudhry, who was the Naval Chief, expressed his disapproval to this act of imposition of Martial Law. He was put under house arrest, and the next incumbent Vice Admiral A.R. Khan was too keen and willing to step into his shoes. This silenced all dissent and was to become the pattern for all future Martial Laws. What mattered and counted was the views of the Commander-in- Chief of Pakistan Army.

His political ambitions also blossomed with this total power in his hands. He coined and framed his route and direction to achieve unquestioned control of the body politics of Pakistan. His sycophants proposed the system of Basic Democracy, and it suited the genius of his mind. When Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, challenged this through her option to contest the elections, he reacted with his unsavory act of massive rigging even in this restricted franchise. In celebration, his son Gahur Ayub went on the rampage, firing his weapons and killing people on the streets of Karachi. This set the pattern and form of rigging the elections and total lawlessness. Where was the accountability? All buried deep under the threat of the barrel of the Gun.

General Ayub Khan fully understood right from the time while he was assured the re- equipping of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, that his path would only be secured if he had his Generals supporting him and he enjoyed the patronage and support of the Super power- America. His solution was to accept American hegemony and dictation for external support and to promote Generals of his choice and put them in key positions. These two choices unilaterally approved and implemented by Ayub Khan morphed into foisting incompetent command in the Army at home and emergence of CENTCOM abroad as the key policy maker for Pakistan. We bartered away our sovereignty since then and have not regained it till today. The classic examples came as handing over the Bada Bher Base to the Americans and the succession of General M. Musa Khan as the next Commander-in-Chief.

Luckily, the Pakistan Air Force was given a free hand and under the able guidance of Air Marshal M. Asghar Khan and Air Marshal M. Nur Khan emerged as a professional and fully combat worthy Arm. The Army too was well equipped and well trained, but the ambitions of Ayub Khan had thrust an incompetent command structure on its top. Luckily, a few professional officers still survived, and they managed to provide some stability and tenor to it. Without labouring into details, some of which I have already covered, the Army Higher Command was saddled with professionally incompetent and inept officers; with just a few exceptions.

The era of Ayub Khan spans 17 Years, first seven years as the Commander-in- Chief and the next 10 Years as the all-powerful President of Pakistan. His achievements and faults are before all of us to judge and comment on. The book "Friends Not Masters," by Altaf Gauhar sums up in grandeur his record and achievements. In retrospect, we have to review, analyse and come to an informed judgment if that claim stands the test of our qualification for the laying of all those claims. History is a cruel judge. The success or otherwise is determined by what remains after you depart. Measured by that yardstick, the political edifice he envisioned and raised collapsed like a house of cards right at his time of departure. The development made and all economic progress did not permeate to the average person. What survived was the culture and the mindset of his handling the affairs of the Army? When he had to hand over power to General M. Yahya Khan, it was again through the imprudent route of Martial Law. Earlier, when General Yahya Khan took over as Commander- in-Chief, in April 1966, some hopes had been aroused. He had the intellect, professionalism, and the experience of both war and staff; he was the only Muslim Lieutenant Colonel to be inducted at the pre-partition faculty of Command and Staff College, Quetta. In the 1965 War, he had shown a logical mind and full grasp of both tactical and strategic implications of the ongoing and planned operations and measured up to it well. Did he come up to those expectations after taking over the Command of the Army is the foremost question? More important is the critical role that he played after assuming full powers of the reign of the country as the self-appointed President of Pakistan, and also its Chief Martial Law Administrator.

General Yahya Khan inherited a collapsed political structure from Field Marshal Ayub Khan, along with a fully formulated insurgency plan in East Pakistan. It was a legacy left behind by a Field Marshal who climbed to this august position through sycophancy and fighting no War. General Yahya Khan in his complacency did not understand the complexity of the problem. Earlier too, when he took the Command of the Army, he betrayed the enthusiasm and hope that most officers had reposed in him. The most alarming aspect was that he promoted all the same officers who we had put down for incompetence, moral turpitude and cowardice. The classic example was of Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) A.A.K. Niazi. In the 1965 War, he commanded 14 (Para)

Brigade in the Sialkot Sector. This brigade never saw action in the War. But he had shown a complete lack of morality and honesty in an act unbecoming of an officer when he wrote his own fictitious citation for Hilal-e-Juraat and brought it to GOC 6 Armoured Division, Major General Abrar Hussain, for his approval. He got very annoyed and out rightly refused to do so because he saw the false pretense behind it. Later, it came as a shock to all of us who knew the facts, when we learned that he took it directly to Lieutenant General Bakhtiar Rana, who headed the gallantry awards committee, and got it approved by him. The full details of this shameful act I had fully described to General Yahya Khan. He should have been Court Marshialled, but Yahya, in his infinite wisdom, promoted him. I cannot express my feelings on hearing the news of his and the promotions of some others. It was disgusting and shocked us all.

Without going into any details, I can only sum it up that it was the offing of a big impending disaster. Ayub Khan's long rule had brewed powerful feelings of deprivation, some based on half-truths but mostly on deliberately coined and fabricated lies. The large Hindu minorities played the game of India. The Civil Administration foisted, which was composed of mostly West Pakistan origin officers, compounded the matters still further by their arrogance, improper handling and indifferent attitude and bearings. They never won the hearts and minds of the people of East Pakistan. In fact, it bred hatred and acrimony against West Pakistan; and its most acute manifestation was against Ayub Khan and the Governor Abdul Monim Khan, who was held in contempt. In this turbid and apathetic atmosphere, Awami League made pernicious propaganda and held influence and sway over the minds of common Muslims of East Pakistan. The deep Indian connivance, their cunningness, and their scheming designs kept exploiting the germs of discontent being cleverly spread. The conspiracies were nurtured and matured. A strong fabric of Mukti Bahini had been raised to act as the strong-arm of Awami League. All this could grow and nourish unheeded, and when General Yahya Khan took over, the situation was irredeemable. He never got the feel of the situation and did not keep his hands on the pulse of the confused but feverishly moved people of East Pakistan. He, in his ill-founded wisdom and vision, believed that free and fair elections would prove to be the answer and all embracing solution of the trepidations that were being felt and nurtured by the people. This is all History and needs no repetition. What is noteworthy is Yahya Khan's naivety and his insensible approach?

During this period in my personal life, I experienced the most traumatic events of my parent's death. My mother was diagnosed with breast cancer in early 1967. She was operated upon in Lahore by Dr Amirud-din, the most experienced surgeon of Lahore, and later went to Germany and England for Radio Therapy and other treatment. On return, she moved to Abbottabad for the summer. One morning she arrived at my house, which was opposite to the Combined Military Hospital (CMH), Rawalpindi, as she felt the need for another checkup. I went to see Brigadier Shaukat Hassan, who was the most eminent surgeon in Pakistan and also renowned internationally, and asked him for time so I could bring my mother for a checkup. He was taken aback at my request and most sincerely and honestly told me, "Mahmud your mother is my mother, and you don't have to bring her to CMH. I will come to your house to see and examine her." This attitude of his touched my heart. I already had a lot of respect for him both as a Doctor and a man, but this attitude of his won him a new place in my heart and mind. He came to the house in the evening and after examining my mother broke the bad news that she has cancer now spread to her other breast. The rest of the details I have already covered while describing my recollections of General Yahya as a soldier and a human being.

My mother was operated upon the next day and later taken to United Christian Hospital at Gulberg, Lahore for Radiation and subsequent treatment. It was painful to see her sufferings, and she kept pleading with me to stop all the treatment as she could not take it anymore. In this state, she died on December 16, 1967. This was incidentally my date of birth. And it saddened me all the more.

It was at the end of March 1968 that I got the news that my father was not well. I went to Lahore and found that he had a high fever, and was also in a state of depression. I got him admitted in CMH, where they diagnosed him with pneumonia. He remained there for a short time and died on 4th April 1968. I felt sorry that I could not give him much personal attention. But felt relieved that he did not have to endure any long sickness and sufferings.

Soon after the death of my father, I received my posting order as CO 33 Heavy Regiment at Jhelum. I wrote a letter to the Military Secretary's Branch at GHQ informing them that because of my father's death I had to take care of some family matters and look after some properties he had left behind, and so I requested that I may be placed in a unit in Lahore. This request was refused, and I took command of the new unit at Jhelum. Incidentally, since I got no opportunity to attend to the affairs of our properties we had inherited, we are still today in litigation with Lahore Development Authority to seek remedies for their illegal acquisition of some of those valuable lands.

The Command of one of the few Heavy Regiments in Artillery was both an exciting experience and a challenge. First, there was a strong prejudice against Army Aviators in the echelons of Artillery Command that they were rusty with their technical and professional knowledge of Artillery, and not very competent in handling this technical Arm. And second, it was most unfortunate that Command of a unit was not given as much importance in the career development of the officers as it deserved. Most officers, who had qualified at the Command and Staff College, Quetta, would prefer to stay in Command for a short period so they could quickly move to an easier assignment in Staff at some Headquarter. I say so because in staff appointment you need to develop a good relationship with the Commander and be able to write appreciations and other operational tasks to be in his excellent books and come in for his high regards. This was an easier requirement and in the career's development was given a higher rating than the Command of the unit. The Command is the actual test of a loyal soldier, both in peace and war, as it tests you in all different conditions, circumstances and situations. The ability to make quick and logical decisions is the crux of a career officer's performance. You develop a comradeship and mutual faith and trust in each other in the unit, and this is the hallmark of the performance at all times and under all circumstances.

I hoped that I will overcome all my weaknesses and shortcomings in these respects and gain the faith and the support of all the men and officers that I commanded and equally to prove the professionalism that it demanded in the eyes of the superiors. This unit already had a reputable performance in 1965 war. I now had the privilege to command this unit for over three years and had the satisfaction that I had trained it, mould it into a cohesive team and still further enhance its battle worthiness. This task was made easier as Brigadier Khurshid Ali Khan was Commander Corps Artillery, at Jhelum. He was in Chamb Sector in 1965 war and had seen my performance, as he was Commander Artillery 7 Division. He had no such bias against the Aviators as he had seen them operate in the area. He was full of praise about their performance, especially the handling of the Artillery shoots. He was mindful of the professional capabilities of the Army Aviators. I was now happy with my command of 33 Heavy Regiment and had the satisfaction that it excelled itself in all fields of its performance. It was most gratifying that I adapted myself to this Command and had proved equal to the task. Everyone was complimentary about it and had nothing but praise for it. I was enjoying my stay with the troops and so felt no desire to seek a staff appointment.

During this unusually long stay in the unit, I took one month's leave abroad and went to Europe along with my wife. First, I stayed with my brother in Bonn and then went over to United Kingdom. There I bought a car and drove back to Pakistan by road. My first stop was Paris, where I stayed with Abdullah Malik, who was doing the French War Course. During my stay with him, he and I were watching a football match on the TV. The Commentary was in French, and obviously I could not follow it. So Abdullah became my interpreter. He told me that the match is between the German and the French teams. I told him I was much impressed by his French. He later told me that the team in black shorts is the French and the German team was in white shorts. I said so far, so good. Then suddenly, he tells me no, the team in black shorts is German and the French team is in white shorts. I was a bit amused, but thought that he had corrected himself. To my utter amazement, while the match went on, Abdullah would keep changing his identification of the two teams. In fact, the match ended, and till the end we did not know which team had won, as we could not discern the two teams. Jokingly, I remarked, "Is this the extent of your knowledge of French. I am wondering how you are doing this French War College Course."Very innocently, he replied, no this commentator was confused and was mixing up the teams. I had a big laugh and said, "I have no choice but to believe." This was in a lighter vein, but I enjoyed my stay in Paris and proceeded on my journey back home. It was an enjoyable experience. There was nothing of significance and we arrived back to Pakistan safely and I resumed my command.

Since the early March 1971, the events in East Pakistan had unfolded it in the ugly and conspiratorial designs and were a cause of concern. The Indian plans and designs were also starkly staring us in our face. We needed some amicable solutions. Sitting with the officers from East Pakistan and their families at social functions, one would lightly joke that we hope a day will not come when we would need a passport to visit the East Wing. They all disclaimed all such apprehensions.

While all this was going on, I noticed that some 32 officers, junior to me had been promoted to full Colonel and sent on different staff assignments. I called Lieutenant Colonel Naseerullah Babar to ask him what was happening. He said that he will go to the Military Secretary's Branch and find out the reason. The next day he called to tell me we are now too senior and will be promoted directly to the rank of Brigadier. It was fair enough, and one just had to wait. I was astonished to find out one morning my posting order for the promotion to the rank of full

Colonel and asking me to proceed to GHQ, Rawalpindi and take over the appointment as DDPA in the PA Directorate. I was totally stunned. I was wondering that Military Secretary's Branch seems to consider me not worth the 32 staff appointments so far made and now finds me suitable for this insignificant assignment. If this was my utility, then I thought it was not worth it for me to continue serving in the Army anymore. Immediately, I wrote out my letter of resignation giving the brief reasons coming to my mind and had it dispatched to Corps Headquarters, through the office of Commander Corps Artillery. He tried to persuade me not to do so, but I was in no mood to change my mind. The next day I was called to Corps Headquarter. When I met the Corps Commander, he was surprised as to why I was doing so. To encourage me, he said that in the whole Corps he has graded two Lieutenant Colonels as "above average", and one of those two was me. I had to tell him very frankly that it does not matter to me as those who are in charge of career planning in the Army think it otherwise. When I said that I refuse to move to GHQ and would wait in my unit for my resignation to be accepted, he was deeply alarmed. He implored me to take over my new assignment and wait for the reply. Acting on his advice, I took over as DDPA and kept waiting for the resignation to be approved. Some days passed, and I was getting no response. In fact, some messages were coming as to why don't I go across to the office of the Military Secretary, which was so close and meet with the Military Secretary.

Major General Agha Ibrahim Akram was my Chief Instructor when I did the staff course. He had no doubts about my performance and was full of praise for it during the final interview. In 1965 war he arrived as Colonel Staff at HQ 15 Division. He had closely watched my performance in the war and shared it closely with the Commander and his staff; which had nothing but words of admiration for me? His brother Lieutenant Colonel (Later Major General) Agha Masud Akram was my next- door neighbour, and whenever he would come to Rawalpindi, he would come over to my house and meet with me. He would recall my performance and performing the Army Aviation Squadron that I commanded and had nothing but the highest of appreciation for it. His word of advice to me would invariably be that I should go to GHQ and get myself posted to some staff assignment. He would tell me I have done enough service in Aviation and now must move over to a staff assignment. I would tell him it was the job of Military Secretary Branch, and I have not even once visited this branch. They may think that I am trying to seek some favours from them, like many officers I knew were doing most regularly. In fact, the whole idea was repulsive to me. I knew that some officers were visiting this branch regularly, even carrying fruit baskets for the staff, for manoeuvring the postings of their choice. A wrong concept was being devolved by a few, that holding of some key staff appointments is a prerequisite for higher promotions in the Army. We used to describe such officers as dancing horses. They had hardly remained in command for any length of service and had nothing to show to distinguish them. The worst was they had either not served in the units during the war, and even if they did, there was nothing that they could talk about.

This is the class of officers that had done an immense damage and disservice to this Army. I felt no need or desire for that or being a part of such activity. I was of the belief that the actual test for an officer is the performance while in command, and his battlefield performance. I had a relatively short period of six months in staff as G-11 Operations with 7 Division, where Lieutenant General Altaf Qadir was the GOC. In the preparations of all the operational plans for his formation, he worked with meticulous detail. He did this without involving his Colonel Staff and the GSO 1. He would have me and Major (Later Brigadier) Faqir Mohammad, G-11 Intelligence, over to his house for some times. He was nothing but full of praise for whatever contribution we could make. It was for this reason that while at Balloki, during the reviewing of those plans and to brief Major General Nasir, GOC 1 Armoured Division, he would sometimes call me in to attend.

All these thoughts kept coming to my mind, but I thought I had no need or desire to meet the Military Secretary. I had firmly decided to leave the Army, and I had no other considerations. I was just waiting for the reply to my resignation.

During this period I was asked by DPA to make a plan for employing some retired Army personnel as part of a security network to beef up help to the troops assigned to East Pakistan. A plan was made to induct about 20-25,000 personnel who would be recruited and dispatched to East Pakistan to help in the internal security duties. They had no combat role but could be useful to boost the strength of the units if the need so arose.

I visited East Pakistan in July 1971. This was my first visit ever to this region. The PIA flights were flying via Colombo, as India had refused the permission of flights over their territories. It was a long trip of some nine hours. In Dhaka, I stayed at the Pakistan Air Force Base, where the Base Commander Group Captain (Later Air Marshal) Inam-ul-Haq, was a friend of mine from the days I spent at the Flight Instructors School, Chaklala. He filled me in on some details of the situation. Of interest was the change in the Base Commander at Dacca. Air Commodore Mitty Masood was holding this fort, and the open views that he would express did not find favours within the Army authorities. So at their request, he was transferred back to West Pakistan. Inam too complained that the views of the Air Force were not being given any importance. He hardly had a few aircraft available to him and knew that the Air Field, leave alone the air space, could not be defended against the Indian Air Force.

I had learned that my brother-in-law, who was running a Pharmaceutical Plant in Lahore, was also in Dacca in connection with his business. I went over to the Intercontinental Hotel to meet with him. Since I had plans to go over to the Governor's House to meet with Brigadier Faqir Mohammad, I took Khalid Mansur with me. While looking for the room where Faqir was staying, I knocked at a door. Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Ghulam Jilani came out of the room and on seeing me, embraced me and invited us in. As we entered the room, I was a bit shocked to see Brigadier S.D. Ahmad, who was sitting there in the company of some people, including some females, all busy drinking. The sight was distasteful. I asked for leave immediately since I was looking for Brigadier Faqir Mohammad and had a meeting with him. Leaving the room, I felt rather upset at this kind of behaviour and attitude under these testing times.

I later had meetings with Brigadier Faqir, Major General Rao Farman Ali and Lieutenant General Tikka Khan. These were rather brief, as they all had their commitments. But my impression was that the uprising of the Mukhti Bahini, which had engulfed the entire country, had been now entirely controlled. There was still tension and uncertainty, but life was beginning to normalise.

I later took a helicopter trip to Rangpur and Chittagong. Brigadier (Later Major General) Abdullah Khan Malik was the Brigade Commander at Rangpur. He gave me the details of how Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Jehanzeb Arbab Khan cleared all the routes through his operations. He was now trying to bring in some stability in the area by liaison with some locals. The writ of the Government had been clearly established right up to the International Boundaries. He thought while peace can be maintained and law and order situation will be fully normalised, the biggest threat were the Indian Army Formations who were now concentrating across the borders. He was giving an estimate of some over six Infantry Divisions, supported by Armour and obviously the availability of their Air Support. In the event of their attack, the Mukhti Bahini's would also reactivate themselves and operate in our rear. It was this contingency which posed the maximum threat, and the military was in no position to handle this, was his assessment. He thought the time that has been gained should be utilised to find a political solution. He knew in his mind that Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rahman was in full collusion with the Indians in their treacherous game plan.

At Chittagong, I got all the details of the mutiny of the Bengali elements of units located there. The massacre that was let loose is hard to describe. Some excesses were made by the regular Bengali troops, but the Mukhti Bahini, which had extensive infiltration of Indian elements committed most of the heinous crimes. Under a well thought out plan, they perpetuated these cowardly acts to mainly find the occasion to put the blame on Pakistan Army for all their barbaric deeds. In any military action, there will always be some excessive use of military force, but to paint the picture that Pakistan Army had gone berserk and was on the rampage and carried out those atrocities is not correct. It was all a part of the scheme of things hatched by the Indians to poison the minds of East Pakistani's.

Back in Dacca, I met with some sane elements of East Pakistan, who invited me to their homes for dinners because of their contacts with my brother-in-law. They still felt that majority of East Pakistani's did not want separation from Pakistan. But the propaganda built up by Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rahman and his Awami League had left a distorted picture in the minds of ordinary people. An example given was that when he says that the streets of Karachi are paved with gold while people starve in East Pakistan, it was literally accepted as gospel truth. For whatever reasons and by whichever methods, he had made himself politically invincible and had all the authority over them.

On my return journey, I was contemplating and reflecting on my experiences of this first and rather short visit to East Pakistan. The situation that was emerging in my mind could not be solved with a military solution. The events have been allowed to drift on for so long that they now demand a political solution to save a major catastrophe. The role of Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rahman and his complicity with India in all their sinister plans had left a big question mark even about his loyalty to Pakistan? I was being reminded of what Begum Shaista Ikram Ullah, had told me way back in 1951 on one of my visits to Karachi about Hussain Shaheed Shurawardy; as narrated by me earlier. The thoughts now emerging in my mind were if that is what she thought about Hussain Shurawardy, what would I think about his prodigy in the form of Mujeeb-ur-Rahman?

Also, the imponderable question was how to defend East Pakistan against the impending Indian attack. The total strength of some 80-90,000 troops, which included some ragtag 25,000 troops to be now sent as planned as non-combatants to defend the lines of communications, was not enough. East Pakistan had been entirely encircled by the Indians. There was a large border to defend. I had seen and discussed the dilemma of the defence of East Pakistan with some formation commanders in the area during my visit; to stretch the writ of Government to the International Boundaries, we had spread ourselves thin. The pondering question was, do we allow the positions to remain so outstretched and allow vast porous areas for the Indian troops to easily bypass and allow the Mukhti Bahini to operate in our rear from within or else to withdraw from the International Boundaries and to hold a tight Defensive Box Formation Position in and around Dacca. Against the odds pitched, even this could not possibly hang on for too long. This was my quick thought that emerged in my mind.

Soon after my return from East Pakistan, I received my promotion order to the rank of Brigadier and to take over as Commander 33 Division Artillery, which was at Quetta. I was wondering why I had been brought to GHQ for just three months, from June to August 1971! Was it to deliberately deflate my ego?! What Major General A.I. Akram had in mind did not interest me. My immediate reaction was to write an official letter to him. In that, I briefly said that I have been waiting for a response to my letter of resignation, but I have been rather amazed to receive my promotion order. I further wrote that since there is an emergency in the country, I will take over my Command, but once the emergency is over, I would like to receive an official reply to my letter of resignation.

I assumed my command at Quetta amidst ever deteriorating situation in East Pakistan and in particular the clear evidence of India showing all signs to invade there. The formation was busy preparing itself for that eventuality. I was told by the General Officer Commanding 33 Division, Major General Nasir A. Chaudhry, that we were part of the force which comprises 1 Armoured Division and 7 Infantry Division, besides our formation. General Tikka Khan, the Corps Commander at Multan, was to be in command of this force. No plans were given, but I was told that this is the main strike force of the Army.

It was under these looming threats of a potential war that we moved to area, Rahim Yar Khan. The real essence of the tragedy in East Pakistan was clearly discernible. The only logical and practical option was to sit with them and resolve the situation peacefully through a dynamic political set up.

I had known that a political cell under Major General Rao Farman Ali had been created and was working in East Pakistan. It was very clear that their task was rather difficult and needed time. This India was not prepared to allow. At the Headquarters of Chief Martial Law Authority, Rawalpindi, a commanding team of Lieutenant General Peerzada, Major General Omar and some other Staff Officers like Brigadier (Later General) K. M. Arif were at work. They wielded all the authority and were the main body to finalise and execute all plans to meet the situation. They had seen no actual combat and lacked all the experience that was so desperately needed at that level of policy making. They did not have the vision, the feel for reality, and the sentiments of the people of the area and above all, hardly had any concept and plan to handle the situation.

To make things more compounded and to rush the matters to the edge of the precipice, there was a total lack of direction and policy initiatives from the President who was the head of this central set up. General Yahya was living in a world of delusion of his own. He was far removed from the ground realities and was believed to remain drunk most of the time. He had stopped applying his mind to the affairs of the state.

The most alarming of all was that there was hardly any link with this Headquarter and the GHQ of the Army. I was not aware of this, but Lieutenant General Gul Hassan told me years later, when I was staying with him at Vienna, that General Yahya Khan was only rarely visiting GHQ for any briefing. He made these suggestions many times to General Abdul Hamid, the then Chief of Army Staff, to request the President to come to GHQ for regular detailed briefings on the situation, but he only occasionally showed up. General Gul Hassan was not sure if the requests were ever even conveyed to the President.

Lieutenant General Gul Hassan in his book has explained at length this predicament and all the efforts he made to balance the situation. In his description of the situation and the orders given to Eastern Command, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan, elaborates as troops were deployed in penny pockets along the border, and that was in consonance with denying the rebels an area which they could secure, declare independence, and call Bangladesh. Keeping this aim in view, Eastern Command had adopted a forward posture of defence based on Border Out Posts (BOP's). There was a need to restructure it according to the need and as the situation demanded. This he describes as, "By November my staff and I were in no need for a clairvoyant to spell out what the future held in store for us:

it was amply clear that we could not prolong the war when it came, and come it must, by holding Dhaka, which was shielded by three enormous rivers to the east, south and west, we could facilitate protracted operations for defensive purposes." For this the orders given were explicit. And last, GHQ Operation Instructions unambiguously stated that Dhaka must be defended at all costs. But the mindset of Lieutenant General Niazi was too stupid and naive to give any thought to implement these decisions. He was living in a world of his own oblivion and far removed from all ground realities. Sitting in the concentration area, all these thoughts were turning in my mind. We still did not know our own operational plans and were just waiting to be brought into the loop. One morning a call came from Divisional Headquarter that Brigadier (Later Major General) Muhammad Riaz Khan, Director Military Operations (DMO) was coming to visit the Headquarter so I may also come over. When I reached there Riaz had already arrived, and I was very pleased to see him as I thought it may be an occasion where we may get some authentic information of the current situation and the workable plans of our own offensive. He briefed on the inevitability of an Indian attack and that we should be prepared for our own operations on the Western Front. He was not coming with any details but just said that our GOC will brief us at the appropriate time. He was planning to spend the night with us, and he told Major General Nasir Chaudhry, that he would like to stay with me at our Headquarter.

It was an excellent opportunity, and we had a very detailed discussion. It primarily centered on the military situation in East Pakistan. I gave him my impressions on the recent visit and the views I had exchanged with some formation commanders there. Having done that I asked the direct question, "Riaz, tell me, given the military imbalance that exists there, can we defend East Pakistan?" His answer was an unequivocal and emphatic, "No." I followed it up with the next question, "If that be so are we strong enough on the Western Front to inflict a military defeat to India on this front?" His answer was the same again. These unambiguous answers prompted me to ask, "Then which war are we going for?" To further elaborate, I told him that given the circumstances we are in, this is the most inappropriate war that we are heading for. We must avoid this under any circumstances and look for a political solution to this imbroglio that we were in. His answer left me absolutely confused. He said, "Mian Sahib, don't worry, a lot of help is coming." When asked to elaborate, he would say nothing, and it was in this state of many unanswered questions that we called it a day and went to our tents to go to sleep.

The next morning I was reflecting on this thought of foreign help.

I was wondering what the truth in it was, or was it a case of our own self-delusion! I had a lurking fear that it was an example of a false sense of security. Who were the source and the author? This question was not clear. It was only after the war that we learned it was HQ CMLA, Major General Ghulam Omar. It seems he was the author or else was he echoing the views of General Yahya? He has never given the answer!

It was on the evening of December 3, 1971, that I got the message from the GOC to be prepared to accompany him at first light the next morning for a recce. It was only when I met him the next day that he told me we are proceeding for a recce of the area of our operational plan. It was a long drive of some over 4 hours. In this effort, we were in the first phase to entrap all the Indian Forces in the area and later destroy those. GOC briefed me that the next phase will be determined after completion of Phase- 1. During this recce, we saw all the routes that were to be used for our final concentration and during the attack. The area was sandy, but the ground was firm and could take our heavy guns.

After this brief recce where I got just the overall concept of our attack plan and the terrain over which we were to operate, we drove back to our present area of concentration. This area we were driving in was all open with hardly any trees, but some bushes scattered as typical of a sandy terrain. At a distance ahead we saw a bus travelling on this track. As we were looking at the bus, we suddenly saw an aircraft emerge from our right and diving. As it approached the bus ahead of us, it suddenly started strafing it. We were rather taken aback. The aircraft made only one run and disappeared toward India. The obvious guess was that perhaps the hostilities have begun, and this was the first act of it we saw. Afterwards, the bus had stopped, and when we reached there, we were happily amazed that all the passengers were safe. It was an unfortunate example of target selection and inaccurate shooting. In the area, we were the only one in a military jeep and in uniform, and yet the enemy could pick only the bus loaded with civilians.

Back in our area of concentration, we got the confirmation of the news that India had attacked East Pakistan and that the hostilities had started. As appreciated earlier, the Indian Army had overwhelming superiority in that theater, and with our line of defence being so thinly scattered all along the International Boundaries, they were very conveniently by passing our positions and making rapid progress. Mukhti Bahini were acting as their eyes and ears and providing all the valuable and vital information to the enemy of our own troop dispositions. It was soon assuming alarming proportions. We had not timely regrouped ourselves and fallen back on a properly organised and balanced defensive position.

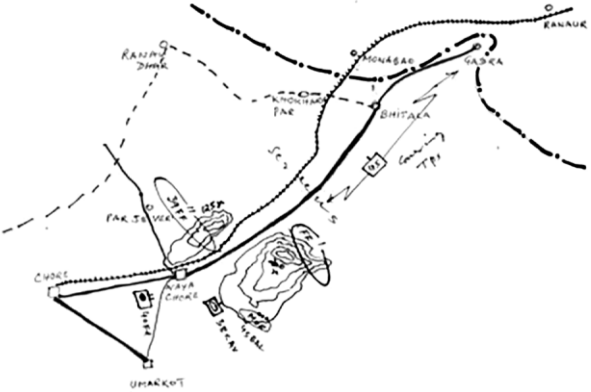
With the situation deteriorating so fast, our counter thrust from the Western Borders of India had to be launched soon. The timing of it was of very significant importance! Why it was being delayed? Again, there is no clear and valid reasoning forthcoming. When I met Lieutenant General Gul Hassan later, at Vienna, he explained that General Yahya Khan was not in regular communication with his own GHQ. He said that he made several attempts through General Abdul Hameed, COAS, but to no avail. But eventually, when he did reluctantly come, he was briefed by CGS and in his own writing as described in his book he elaborates, "Subsequently, the President was acquainted with the new plans and he appeared satisfied, but objected to the timings of the launching of the counter-offensive operations. Here, I suspect that he had been got at by the COAS, who had raised similar doubts when I had spelled the plans to him. The point of contention was that both the President, and the COAS wished the preliminary operations to be launched first and when their objectives had been secured, the main counter-offensive would be set in motion. I argued that the two operations were synonymous, and if they were not undertaken simultaneously, the plan would be unhinged." The situation was alarming! Not only the C-in-C was not in regular touch with GHQ, but even within that HQ the views of COAS and the CGS were not in harmony with each other and they were not on the same wave length. Under these circumstances, I asked Lieutenant General Gul Hassan why did he not resign. Explaining this he said, "He thought about it many times. But he considered that it may be termed as an act of deserting the sinking ship of Yahya Khan and his coterie, and so he abstained."

As frustrations about the delay in the launching of the main strike force piled up, we received orders that 33 Division Headquarters, with Divisional Artillery and one Infantry Brigade, should move to Chor Sector immediately. We had a brigade in that area, but the Indians had attacked there with one Infantry Division and were now threatening our positions in and around Chor. Since this unexpected development had begun to unhinge our defences in that area, GOC Major General Nasir Chaudhry and I rushed ahead, with the rest of the Division (apart from two brigades and a field regiment) was ordered to follow us straightaway. The distance from Rahim Yar Khan to Chor was about 350 km. There was the urgent requirement to get there in time before the enemy could make any breakthrough. After driving the whole day, we reached the location of the 44 Brigade Headquarter by the evening. It was a wellprepared bunker where we met the Brigade Commander Brigadier Anwar-ul- Haq, popularly known as Andy. Brigadier Anwar told us reassuringly that despite being overstretched on the ground, the enemy had not had any major success. In fact, he said that the enemy had so far not contacted our central defensive positions ahead of Chor. His task was to defend the green belt. All the desert ahead up to the border was not to be defended. According to the briefing given by him, he mentioned that his brigade is stretched over a 280-mile front. His one Battalion with one battery of 40 Field Regiment was at Badin, while at Chor he had two infantry battalions and 40 Field Regiment less battery.

The enemy was advancing along the Road and the Rail track from Gadra to Chor. The railway track was a narrow gauge line, and in his plan, he had the task to deny the enemy this track. He said that he could not implement his entire plan, which included uprooting the railway track, laying off minefields and denying water sources to the enemy, because he received no warning of the impending operations. Since the people living in the area had not been evacuated so far, he could not deny them the water sources and the railway link for their eventual evacuation.

It was getting dark, so he swiftly took us forward to look at his defensive layout. As we were having a general look of the area in the fading light, Andy was again very confident and reassuring us that the enemy had not even contacted our forward positions. It lulled us into some sense of complacency, in that there was no immediate danger. By the next morning, our troops should arrive, and we did not see any problem in fully restoring stability and strengthening of our defences in the area.

The layout of our own defences is follows:-



With this hopeful situation as depicted by Andy, I went over to the bunker of CO 40 Field Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Abdul Hamid, popularly known as Hamidi. He needs no introduction, as he had been the most successful Captain of the Pakistan hockey team. Also, he was a friend from the days of 12 Medium Regiment, where I started my career as a gunner officer around 1951. Since I was so tired after the entire day's hectic activity, I immediately went off to sleep. It was at about 0400 Hours in the morning that suddenly there was massive concentrated fire by Artillery on our positions. After Andy's reassurances from the previous night, we did not expect an attack by the Indian Artillery, especially not one based on accurate information of the location of the Brigade Headquarters. Since I was so tired, I dozed off to sleep almost immediately. It was only a little while later that an orderly came to wake me up, and told me that the GOC wants me urgently at the Brigade Headquarter. As I entered the bunker, Major General Nasir Chowdhry and Andy were sitting in front of the map; both sporting concerned looks on their faces. On seeing me, the GOC told me that contrary to the previous assessment of the situation, the Indians had contacted our forward defence. Not only that, but they had attacked the Right Forward position of 22 FF Regiment at 200 R, overrunning that and leading to our troops being forced to retreat. This was rather very alarming! While I was still digesting that, I was told that now we have no troops between the enemy and the Brigade Headquarter, except 40 Field Regiment, less a battery. At this very moment, I received a call from Hamidi, frantically, conveying to me the gravity of the situation and how the Infantry Battalion had abandoned their positions. The matter had got further aggravated, as the Indians now had a direct view of the location of the Guns and were aiming their firepower at those positions. This was most hazardous, and under these circumstances, he was emphatically imploring me to pull back the regiment and withdraw to a safer location. I had little time to think, but I had made my decision and accordingly told him firmly, "Hamidi, I cannot withdraw you. There are no troops between the enemy and the Brigade Headquarter, except your unit. Fight it there as infantry and gunners together. We have no other choice." And to his credit, he and his unit braved it most manfully. They suffered a few injuries during this, and the sight of a gun was only partially damaged, but apart from that, there was little other damage. They stayed on in that location until the time of Cease Fire. In this desperate situation, Andy turned to the Air Force, asking them for Air Support. It was at this time, I noticed that Lieutenant General K.M. Azhar, who was Governor NWFP had arrived, telling us that General Yahya had rushed him there because of his valuable experience in the area during the 1965 War.

A brief discussion followed, where I maintained that we had no alternative but to hope that our troops would arrive in time to stabilise the situation. I further suggested to the GOC that we should come out of the bunker and let the Brigade Commander use his initiative to stabilise the situation. As we emerged out of the bunker, I saw Major Ismail, the old intelligence officer of the Army Group Royal Pakistan Artillery (AGRPA) from my Peshawar days, standing there wearing the Rangers' uniform. He was shivering. I asked him what the matter was. He said, "S-sir, its freezing." I just laughed and told him, "Don't be silly. You are feeling cold in a jersey, and here I am in my khakis, not feeling anything." It transpired that their ranger's outpost was run over by the enemy, and he had to fall back to the Brigade Headquarter in a hurry. He was very nervous, but I told him to calm down and relax. Suddenly, I noticed that in the trench nearby where two rangers sat cuddled together and had some strange looks on their faces. They were as pale as ghosts. I told them to cheer up as they were now in a safe location and should have no fear of any unknown. As we were standing there under the clump of trees, I heard the aircraft above us. I thought that since Andy was asking for Air Support, these must be our own. We suddenly heard the plane go into a dive. Though we could not see them, we felt oblivious to any threat to ourselves. In a brief second, there was a tremendous burst of fire all around us. It left nothing but a cloud of dust in its wake, temporarily blinding us. Instinctively, I went down into the bunker where I saw only Andy, and not the others who were with me standing above the bunker. I suggested to him we go up to get an assessment of the situation. As we came on top, we saw Lieutenant General K.M. Azhar lying flat on the ground. We thought that perhaps he is very seriously injured and hence lying unconscious on the ground. We both picked him up and took him down into the bunker. When we looked closely at him, we saw no sign of any serious injury except just a drop of blood coming out of his chin. We sprinkled some water on his face upon which he woke up, much to our relief. It was at this point that I recalled that Major General Nasir Chaudhry, who was also standing there with us and told Andy that I was going to look for him. As I came out of the bunker, the second time, the dust had somewhat settled, and visibility had improved. I saw Major General Chaudhry standing there and leaning on one leg. When I asked him why he did he not come down, he replied calmly, "Mahmud, I am injured." His right knee had been bleeding, and upon closer inspection, I saw that it was shattered. Seeing his condition, I thought it was better to move him to the Main Dressing Station (MDS) in the rear. To this he refused, stating that he would not abandon his command and go back under these times of crisis. I had to remind him that in his present condition there was hardly any contribution that he could make, and even if he could, we had to wait for our troops who were expected to be there by now. He told me that the only way he would agree to this was if I was to take command of the division, " I know both the other Brigade Commanders are senior to you, but I have no faith in them" he told me. I assured him he need not worry on that account and that we will stabilize the situation. On this assurance he agreed to go back to Main Dressing Station (MDS) only and said that he will wait there till the situation is restored. I asked the ADC to the GOC, Captain (Later Brigadier) Mahmud Shah to get the jeep and evacuate the GOC back to the MDS. On his way back to the MDS the GOC saw our troops who were just arriving in the area. He met with Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) Mohammad Taj CO 17 Sind Battalion en route and asked him about the Brigade Commander Brigadier Ghulam Hussain. He was told that he was holding in a trench, because of the active Indian Aircraft threat in the area. The GOC told Lieutenant Colonel Taj to take over the Brigade and proceeded to the rear. When the GOC left, I had more time to look around, I saw Major Ismail, still standing there looking a little calmer and composed. When my eye caught the attention of the two Rangers in the trench, to my utter horror, I found them both dead. Their ghost-like faces before the attack came to my mind, and I reflected that possibly they had some premonition of this fate coming to them.

At this stage, there was an urgent need to deploy the guns and to locate our Brigade, which I was expecting to arrive in the area soon, so I decided to drive towards Umar Kot to meet with them. I happily met Major (Later Brigadier) Niaz Ahmad, my Brigade Major, en route. It was most satisfying to learn from him he had taken the initiative of deploying the guns. When I checked their location, I was happy that they were covering the entire front of our troop's positions. We now had one additional Field Regiment (37 Field) and one medium regiment (65 Medium) available with us. This was the first requirement and a step towards stabilising the positions at Chor. I then met Lieutenant Colonel Mohammad Taj, CO 17 Sind Battalion and Lieutenant Colonel Mansur, CO 37 Field Regiment, taking them to forward positions, from where we could better observe enemy locations and in particular, the position of 200 R. The 22 FF Battalion had previously abandoned their positions there, which were now in the enemy's occupation. I made a plan of attack to recapture 200 R and also prepared the Artillery Support plan for this operation, along with Taj and Mansur. Having done that, I felt satisfied that we have now no threat of the enemy and also that we could now wrest the initiative back from him; I drove back to the Brigade Headquarters. On my arrival, I briefed both Lieutenant General K.M.Azhar and Brigadier Anwar-ul-Haq, about the news of our troops, the deployment of the Guns and the Plan to recapture 200R. They were both relieved and reassured that the early morning crisis was over and the situation had now stabilised. Lieutenant General Azhar told me he had been told by GHQ to take over the temporary Command of the Division before a new incumbent was rushed in. To my surprise, he then asked me to hold the plan of attack, giving no reasons for it. I felt very frustrated. In that mood, I gave Major Niaz the orders to execute the Fire Plan as prepared, when the guns were ready. This was done, and perhaps it had the desired impact on the enemy as he made no further moves in the area of 200 R after that.

With the hectic activities of the day being over, I went over to sleep for the night as I felt exhausted. The next day I got up rather late, and as I finished my breakfast, Major Niaz was calling me on the wireless. I was rather surprised when he told me that 39 FF Battalion, which was occupying the forward position on the left at 125 R, had abandoned their posts in the face of the enemy attack.

As the acting GOC seemed to have no solution or decision at hand, I decided to rush to the area and to see the situation for myself. While on the way, Major Niaz told me that one observer, Subedar Mehdi, stayed on his position (Was relocated by his Battery Commander? and was directing our firepower accurately.) I told him to concentrate all the guns and fire at the highest rate. En route, I met Lieutenant General Sharif, who was driving up in a jeep. He informed me he had been sent there to take over the command of the Division. I briefed him on the situation and advised him to come with me to the position of 39 FF Battalion. As we were approaching the area, we saw Lieutenant Colonel Ijaz, the CO, holding a walking stick in his hand and frantically waving it at the retreating troops to stop. We joined him in this effort and arrested the chaos which had so ensued. The Battery Commander Major (Later Lieutenant General) Amjad Shoaib was also with the CO 39 FF. When some years later, I met the battery commander, Major (Later Lieutenant General) Amjad Shoaib; he told me that he had the FOO Subedar Mehdi relocated from where he was tasked to bring the area under observed fire. Whether he stayed on or relocated, he had done a wonderful job! Around this time, Major Niaz told me that since the Indians had been in the open, the Artillery fire had a devastating effect on the enemy. As a result, they suffered substantial casualties. This led them to abandon their position and vacate the area, leaving their dead and injured behind. The Artillery fire alone, without the participation of the Infantry, had managed to recapture the lost position. I had also been informed that the observer was still there, and he had conveyed all the details to him. This was very reassuring. Lieutenant General Sharif, I, Lieutenant Colonel Ijaz and the troops of his unit, rushed to the area to see the situation on the ground for ourselves. The whole place had been vacated, saves for the bodies of the dead and wounded lying around. In the meantime, Brigadier Anwar-ul-Haq accompanied by Lieutenant Colonel Taj also arrived. The unit re-occupied its original position in its responsibility. In the meantime, we met Subedar Mehdi, who emerged from his dug in observer's post. He gave us all the graphic details of the entire day's action. I decided to initiate a citation for the immediate award of SJ to Subedar Mehdi. Having achieved to bring in stability to our positions, the new GOC and I came back to the Brigade HQ and briefed the entire group that had been impatiently awaiting our return.

This was the last of the Indian military activity in the area. The task given to 44 Brigade was to defend the green belt of Chor and to leave the entire desert ahead. As that had been achieved, the new GOC did not feel the need to order any further offensive either. This stalemate continued till the ceasefire came on December 16, 1971.

It was a very tragic day! We had to suffer the ignominy of defeat in a war, knowing that it was an impossible task. I was immediately reminded of what I had told Brigadier Mohammad Riaz, the Director of Military Operations, earlier at Rahim Yar Khan. Where was that help that had been promised? The Indians have written many accounts of their glorious victory, but the one that sums up their exuberance is,

"Never in the history of warfare has so much been achieved by so few in such a brief span of time." The answer to this was given by a Western Military Analyst. He wrote,"Given the same situation on the ground and same circumstances, no other Army in the World would have done worse than that." It was a very tragic day in our history'. It caused a stir in me personally, since I was born on December 16, and my mother had also passed away on this same date.

We settled down to the routine of life after the post-cease fire days. My meetings with Lieutenant General Sharif initially covered the events in the Chor Sector. I went over how we had to rush to this sector and all the events that transpired after our arrival. In particular, I highlighted the vulnerability of Brigadier Anwar-ul-Haq's Brigade. He had to cover a front of over 280 miles, and obviously, his resources were very limited. To top that, he had some new raisings like 22 and 39 Frontier Force Battalions, which had hardly received any training and were not even fully equipped. The units deployed did not have adequate wireless and line communications, which led to there being times where the Battalion Headquarter and the Companies were not in communication with each other. The GOC had developed a prejudice against him, and I thought I must clear some of his misunderstandings. I cannot say that I fully removed that bias that he had developed against Andy!

The rest of the time we were discussing the background of the war and the repercussions of its obvious outcome. He was full of praise of our course, the First Pakistan Military Academy Long Course, as he was familiar with most of us. But what I did not share with him was the poor opinion and hatred that I had developed against General Yahya Khan and the coterie of his close Generals. It was rather shameful that even after the War fiasco, he was still not willing to hand over the power. In fact, it was not until a group of six officers located around Gujranwala sent him a clear message saying, “If you do not give up the office, we will move 6 Armoured Division to Rawalpindi to make you do that.” These brilliant officers sacrificed their glittering careers to achieve what was so desperately needed. Later they were all court-martialled and dismissed from the Army.

In this whole gory drama and depredation, General Yahya Khan had left a big void and vacuum within his own constituency; the Army. He had General Abdul Hamid Khan, his close friend and a drinking bosom, as the only tenuous link. The Commander-in-Chief was not readily available to the senior officers, who were the planners to plan and execute all the detailed plans. A small coterie had him surrounded and kept him isolated. This was clearly a recipe for disaster. To add fuel to the burning fire in East Pakistan, he made the atrocious decision of sending Lieutenant General A.A.K. Niazi as the Commander of troops in East Pakistan. He lacked the character, brains, vision and professionalism that were so desperately needed to handle the explosive situation.

In my review and distention of the distraught situation of East Pakistan then, I will remain confined to only two fundamental issues. Were there any palatable political options left and could the shameful surrender be avoided? Surely, there were many possible choices, and all they needed was to apply their minds.

Unfortunately, General Yahya Khan had mentally got so deranged because of his heavy drinking, that probably he had lost control of all sense and mustering of his mental faculties, and if any wisdom was left to harness and use it. The sad and the worst part of it all was that the destiny of the country had been left entirely in his hand and control. It was ironic that while he had mostly detached himself from the Army, he was surrounded by a small coterie which was filtering all information to him on as they deemed it fit and chose and not what the urgency and priority warranted. It was a dilemma for everyone who had some responsibility to handle this ever worsening situation. The alternatives had disastrous connotations and needed to be addressed squarely and handled with the alacrity and urgency that it so demanded. It was incumbent on the higher Army Command to tell the President and Chief Martial Law Administrator the stark realities and the grimness of the events unfolding themselves directly to his face and to ask him to find a suitable political solution. The War that was so cleverly planned by India was not the answer. We should not have fallen in that trap! Given the same circumstances, both external and internal, no Army in the world could have handled it. The only remedy was political. General Yahya Khan was foolish in thinking that the Awami League will not have a landslide victory in the elections. He was fed false intelligence that the religious and other Islamist Parties would keep a reasonable share of success in elections.

If he was not in a fit state to do that, a definite answer was needed to find a suitable and legal remedy. In the curse of Martial Law, there is no provision for such a situation. It has to be devised and triggered at the spur-of-the-moment No one had dared his neck out for that. The only sensible answer is that Martial Law is hardly the solution and remedy for any contingencies in the country. It must not be allowed to be staged or accepted. But yet it is unfortunate that it has surfaced and entrenched itself for four times and for nearly half the life of this country.

On the Military side, all decisions and actions were taken belatedly, with an incompetent reading of the situation or perhaps just forced out of the unfolding events. There was no planning. To illustrate the point how General Yahya Khan, in that state of incapacitation of mind because of his heavy alcoholism, was taking the most vital decisions, I will cite only two but palpably most momentous occasions. The first was when all negotiations had broken down, and the final decision was being taken to enforce a military crackdown. It is apparent through hindsight that General Yahya Khan and his coterie of close advisors were typically oblivious of the ground realities. They had no idea of the extent of subversive activities that had permeated the body politics and the mindset of Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rahman and his force of Mukhti Bahini.

They had conspired with India, and all plans were prepared. Any military action will entail the use of strength to establish the full writ of the Government. Even if successful, could they find the lasting solution and answer? Mindless of all that, they still chose Military Action. The Bengali troops in Chittagong rebelled and deserted at other places. What followed was brutality, which is hard to describe. Could not this be foreseen? Lieutenant General Yaqub Ali Khan had resigned foreseeing that. The higher command, and in particular the Martial Law cell, working independently seemed to be either blind and oblivious or else did not have the courage to advise the Chief Martial Law Administrator of the impending disaster. It was the worst possible assessment and equally, the imprudent decisions made. When the crackdown took place, it had to deal with a massive insurgency which was fully supported from across the borders. Also, the brutalities started by the Mukhti Bahini against innocent West Pakistan women and children had left a deep imprint and had equally affected the minds of the troops. The situation could not be handled without the use of aggressive force. Many excesses may have been committed, and the Army has to share the blame for that, but it cannot be held that it was only the Army which is entirely to be blamed. A good Commander could have calmed the storm, but in General Niazi, we had a despicable person who added further fuel to the fire.

The other most important issue is the most brazen and willful act of going to war by India. It was all planned, and forces had been already amassed to launch this. What is regrettable is our plan of reaction and worse, the professional handling of the War? In the way of our response, it is abundantly clear that the false hope of foreign help was a delusion which was being spread by some key elements and had some purpose. That it was in the mind of Director Military Operations, Brigadier M. Riaz Khan, too, was rather alarming. The truth has never been evaluated and found out. What is quite apparent is that General Yahya Khan had some false illusion that since he acted as the bridge between USA and China and Henry Kissinger’s first visit to China was arranged from the soil of Pakistan, America owes it to Pakistan to come to its help at this critical juncture? He failed to understand that in diplomacy and relationship of countries there are no fixed positions. In particular, America has a history of exploiting their close contacts with Pakistan for their own National Interests only. In this situation, they had no such concern, and they showed no interest to come to any clear and unqualified rescue of Pakistan. In fact, some indications do suggest that they had their complicity in the breakup of Pakistan. It was only naïve and blissful minds which believed otherwise.

General M. Yahya Khan, in his handwritten reply titled, "Yahya Speaks", later printed by his son Ali Yahya, has made some attempt to explain and clarify. But it seems irrelevant. Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown. General Yahya Khan wore that and that too he was a usurper in that act. He had many excellent qualities of head and heart. But he wasted those in his compulsive habits of alcoholism. Even after the fiasco in East Pakistan, he still sincerely believed that because of his close links with President Nixon, he could still help guide Pakistan out of the turmoil. He was not willing to hand over command. It was finally a message sent by six officers headed by Brigadier F.B. Ali, telling him that if he does not give up the presidency by the evening, they would be obliged to act. And with that, Yahya Khan's rule ended. What matters is what remained after he departed. The key to our survival was that we must have the courage to learn from the past and not to allow the same mistakes to be repeated. The fundamental issue is that we cannot permit one man, whoever he may be, to become the sole arbitrator of the fate of the country. It is absolutely criminal that we allowed the same mistake repeated as in the case of General Musharraf. Should we not be looking for bringing him and all his cohorts, across the board, at the altar of justice?

The events were changing quickly and fast. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was installed as the President and Chief Martial Law Administrator. He picked up Lieutenant General Gul Hassan as the next Commander-inChief. It was the best news that we could have. For the first time, we were to have a professional Commander in this Army. We all had very high hopes for him and felt exuberant at his elevation to this critical and coveted appointment.

Soon after he took over the Command, Lieutenant General Gul Hassan undertook a trip to visit all the formations in the field. When he arrived at the Helipad at Chor, The GOC Lieutenant General Sharif, Brigadier Ghulam Hussain, Brigadier Anwar-ul-Haq and I were there to receive him. On coming out of the helicopter, General Gul Hassan, looking confident as always, came striding out in quick steps towards us. After the official protocol was over, he came over to me and said that he will go in the jeep with me. I led him to my jeep, and as he sat down, Brigadier Ghulam Hussain came over and asked General Gul Hassan if he were to go in his jeep as he had something personal to discuss. He travelled with him to the Division Headquarters, where a briefing was given by the GOC. I was happy that it was balanced and had no adverse reference to performing 44 Brigade Commander. Once the briefing was over, I told him I had initiated a citation for the immediate Award of Sitara-e-Jurata for Subedar Mehdi, the observer with 39 Frontier Force Battalion. There has been no approval forthcoming. He told me he will look into it on his arrival at GHQ. This was followed by lunch, and when the time for departure came, General Gul again said that he would travel with me in my Jeep. As we were driving to the helipad in his typical style, he said, “You know what this so and so Ghulam Hussain was telling me.” “I had to obviously say, “No Sir.” He explained that Ghulam Hussain was telling him he performed well in the war and that he should not be ignored at the time of his promotion. His sharp concluding remarks were, “Don’t I know better.” That was the man, clear in his mind and decisive. This is what the Army needed so badly! Before we reached the helipad, I told him I was still awaiting the answer to my letters of resignations I had sent before I moved to take over my Command. Typical to his style, he said, “Get lost. You will never hear from me.” I was left with no choice!

The very next day we got the confirmation of the award of SJ to Subedar Mehdi. This was how the things were moving, and we felt happy and assured that the much needed time for a change in the Army had come and the man at the head would no doubt do it. The sudden news of his dismissal and the takeover of the Command as the Chief of Army Staff by General Tikka Khan came as a shock. Not so much because of the choice of General Tikka Khan, but more because the Army was deprived of the dynamic leadership of General Gul Hassan that it so badly needed. I knew in my mind that given the time he would have brought in revolutionary changes in the higher command structure that it so badly and urgently needed. It needed men of Command, and Battle tested experience, rather than these so called purely staff officers and yes men, whom we looked at as the dancing horses!

Every inch General Gul Hassan was a soldier. He worked as ADC to Field Marshal Slim at a very early stage of his career and thus had his grooming through that experience. Having observed the War in the Burma Front from the prism of the highest Formation Commander of the area, he had some unique memories, coupled with a thorough understanding of how the operations were planned and conducted at that level. He saw what senior officers at that epic position epitomized, and he had devolved his own flair and style in consonance with that. He knew the importance of timely decision making in the battle. It is the ultimate test of the commander’s ability to determine the course and the outcome of the Battle. Equally, he understood the failings and the shortcomings at different rungs of the Command structure. It is the Command which is the ultimate test of the soldier. The shortcomings that the Army had at that level were very well understood by him. These have to be instinctively perceived and immediate action taken to correct this serious failing. It is ultimately the Commander in the battlefield who has to take all decisions to act in the enemy's face rather than through the experience of hindsight. General Gul Hassan had used this experience to develop and mature at every level, starting from the unit commander right up to the position of the Commander-in-Chief that he attained. He had his own kinks and idiosyncrasies, but they suited his grooming as a forthright and candid officer who had faith and confidence in himself, regardless of whether that would lead to him incurring the wrath and enmity of anyone. He would always keep the cause and the concern of the Army and the Country supreme. He never compromised on that. It is a surprise that despite such strength of character and such fixation of his views, he ever rose to this position of the Commander-in-Chief in the Army.

Unfortunately as it was, General Gul Hassan did not remain in command of the Army for a long enough period to bring about the desperately desired changes. We were all disappointed at his dismissal, as we all had pinned very high hopes in him. The news of the appointment of General Tikka Khan as the Chief of the Army Staff brought some satisfaction in that he was most sincere, dedicated, hardworking and a man who would listen to others. Where he lacked in his intellectual capacity, he partially made up for it by his courage, calm temperament, and his ability to take decisions.

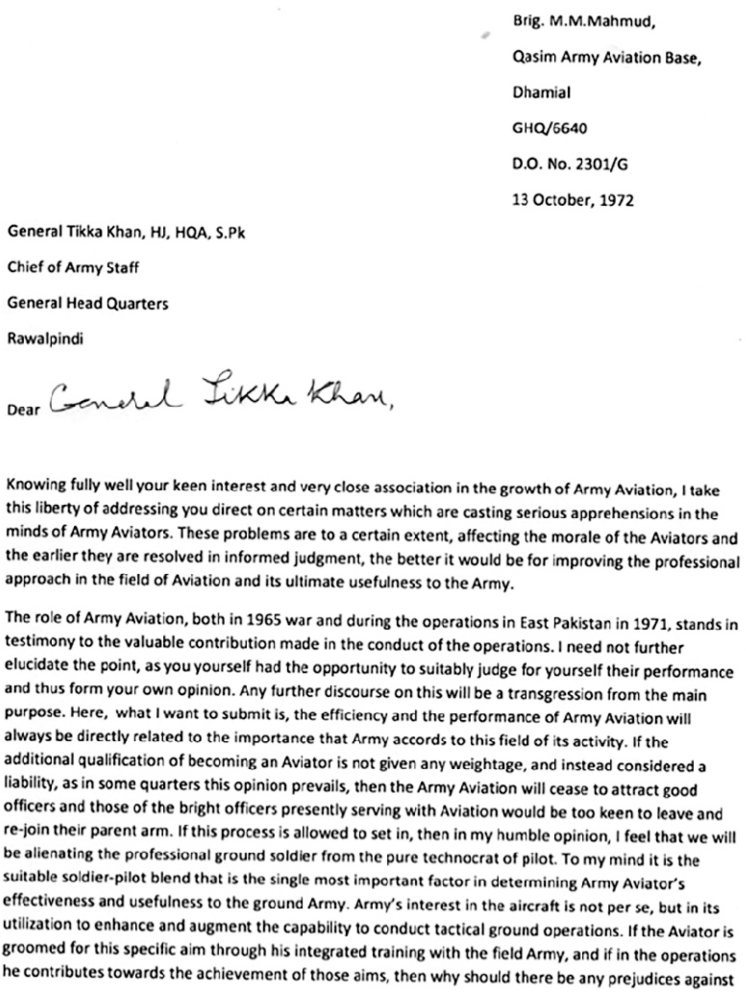
At Chor, activities were normal, like peacetime training and other related matters. We had a new GOC, as Major General Iqbal, took over from Lieutenant General Sharif. For whatever reasons, which I could not fathom, he came with a biased mind against Brigadier Anwar-ul- Haq. I tried to explain it to him it was not his fault, but he was not convinced. Then the new Chief of Army Staff (Designation had been changed from that of Commander-in-Chief), General Tikka Khan also came on a visit to the troops. He too it seemed had a brief against the Brigade Commander 44 Brigade. I tried to explain it to him that the Brigade was too thin on the ground and that the units were new and not well equipped and trained. He listened, but I am not sure if he again agreed with me.

One day Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Hamid came to see me and told me that performing of his Subedar Major was not up to the mark during the war and that he would like to retire him from the Army. I told him it was his prerogative and he need not even refer it to me. A few days later he again came to see me and said that he had thought over the matter of his Subedar Major, and felt that removal may be too harsh a punishment for him and instead he would like him to be adjusted in one of the new raisings. I again told him that why he was asking me. He should call the Artillery Centre and ask them to arrange his posting. He said that the lines are not too clear, and he thought that if he could send him on leave for a few days, he may do it himself. I had no objection to that. But he reminded me that under the GHQ policy all leave is stopped. To end the matter, I told him he had my permission. A few days later, Hamidi told me that the Field Intelligence Unit (FIU) personnel of the Division are milling around in the unit and are trying to make some inquiries. I was rather upset about it. On my next visit to the Division Headquarter, I raised the matter with the GOC. He told me I need not be worried about it as it was a routine matter. But I had to tell him that this was not my way of command. If he thinks that there is something wrong in my formation, then the best is that he should ask me directly rather than sending the FIU to make inquiries, was my polite but clear answer. To his credit, the FIU people never visited my units again.

It was time to write the Annual Confidential Reports of the officers. All the Commanding officers of the units working under me and my own Brigade Major, Major Niaz, had all done very well under the conditions of the battlefield. I was giving them all the grade of Above the Average. As I was showing the report written, to Lieutenant Colonel Mansur, CO 37 Field Regiment, I just in a light-hearted vein was telling him I would not have given him this kind of report if I had not seen him in Command and that too in actual operations. He was rather bemused and asked me as to why so? Explaining it to him, I said that since he had been on a staff appointment as Military Secretary to General Musa for a considerable time, I have a definite aversion to such officers who mostly remain on staff jobs. To me, the actual test is the Command. His reply was fascinating and thoughtfully represented my own views. He said, “You are only reflecting on one aspect of the career of the officers. There is another misguided emphasis on career management. Inquisitively, I asked, for instance, which others? He said he may cite only one example. He gave his personal observation by saying, “The higher command of the Army wants the officers to behave like mice during the peacetime, but expects them to roar like a lion during the War. It is not possible as they are not attuned to that.” I instantaneously burst into laughter. An apt description of some ills! There were some others too that always were uppermost in my mind, and I always detested those. One had high hopes that General Gul Hassan could address all those. Now the responsibility was clearly thrust on the shoulders of General Tikka Khan. I was only hoping and praying that he will prove to have big enough shoulders to do that. This only the time could tell! Though I had some inkling, I was still surprised to see my posting as Commander Army Aviation Base, Dhamial. I had hardly commanded the formation for only a few months and was hoping to remain in command there rather than be posted back to Army Aviation. But I had no control over it, and I never enjoyed chalking out my career management, and so I raised no questions on that. I went over to see the GOC for a farewell meeting. He too expressed his surprise and said that he would have liked me to stay over in command under him. Since there was no other issue, I told the GOC that though the matter is not for his level and also should have not been for consideration before me, but since I was involved and the case is pending, I must brief him about it. I narrated to him as to what reservations Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Hamid, had about his Subedar Major and as to how he was keen that he be adjusted in one of the new raisings. I also explained that though the matter was for CO to finalise, but he could not do it so far and had asked me for permission for him to proceed on leave so that he could go to Artillery Centre and get it done personally. In response to that request, I had granted him the permission to leave. The GOC told me that I should not worry about it and that the matter could be handled at the unit level. With all the pleasantries over, I took leave from him and flew over to Drigh Road Base, Karachi. It was a pleasant surprise to see Air Commodore Khaqan Abbassy, who had taken over as Deputy Managing Director Pakistan International Airlines, to receive me there. We and some others were all very close friends of our days with the Air Force at PAF, Chaklala.

Back at Dhamial, after a break of three and a half years, I noticed that nothing much had changed. Even most of the faces were all familiar except some newly trained young Army Aviators. There was a little bias towards the helicopter fleet as Allouette-111 and MI-8 helicopters had been inducted. Since I had had no formal training as a helicopter pilot, I did some flying on OH-13 Helicopter. When I felt comfortable on that, I flew Allouette 111 and MI-8 as part of their routine flying sorties rather than any proper conversion. I thought I should learn enough so I could pilot in any emergency and to also understand the unique problems associated with the handling of rotary wing flights. A proper transition to these would have been very time consuming and also costly in the way of costs of flying Hours involved.

The main important thing that was coming to my mind was the career management of the Army Aviators. It had attracted a very fine lot of officers who were bright, professional and had a future ahead of them. It was important that the career of these officers should not be jeopardised because of their stay in Army Aviation. There was a growing distinct prejudice against them. To clear this aspect, I wrote a letter to the COAS. A copy of this is placed below:-



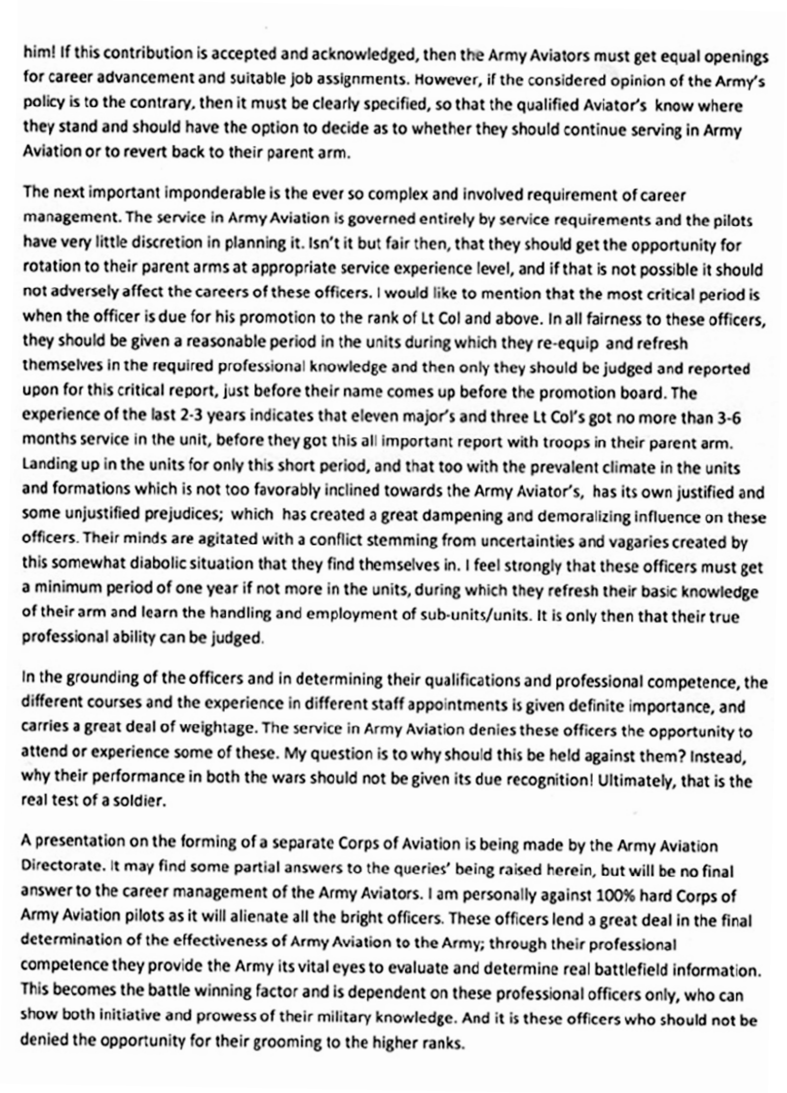
Brig. M.M.Mahmud,
Qasim Army Aviation Base,
Dhamial
GHQ/6640
D.O. No. 2301/G
13 October, 1972

General Tikka Khan, HJ, HQA, S.Pk
Chief of Army Staff
General Head Quarters
Rawalpindi

Dear General Tikka Khan,

Knowing fully well your keen interest and very close association in the growth of Army Aviation, I take this liberty of addressing you direct on certain matters which are casting serious apprehensions in the minds of Army Aviators. These problems are to a certain extent, affecting the morale of the Aviators and the earlier they are resolved in informed judgment, the better it would be for improving the professional approach in the field of Aviation and its ultimate usefulness to the Army.

The role of Army Aviation, both in 1965 war and during the operations in East Pakistan in 1971, stands in testimony to the valuable contribution made in the conduct of the operations. I need not further elucidate the point, as you yourself had the opportunity to suitably judge for yourself their performance and thus form your own opinion. Any further discourse on this will be a transgression from the main purpose. Here, what I want to submit is, the efficiency and the performance of Army Aviation will always be directly related to the importance that Army accords to this field of its activity. If the additional qualification of becoming an Aviator is not given any weightage, and instead considered a liability, as in some quarters this opinion prevails, then the Army Aviation will cease to attract good officers and those of the bright officers presently serving with Aviation would be too keen to leave and re-join their parent arm. If this process is allowed to set in, then in my humble opinion, I feel that we will be alienating the professional ground soldier from the pure technocrat of pilot. To my mind it is the suitable soldier-pilot blend that is the single most important factor in determining Army Aviator's effectiveness and usefulness to the ground Army. Army's interest in the aircraft is not per se, but in its utilization to enhance and augment the capability to conduct tactical ground operations. If the Aviator is groomed for this specific aim through his integrated training with the field Army, and if in the operations he contributes towards the achievement of those aims, then why should there be any prejudices against

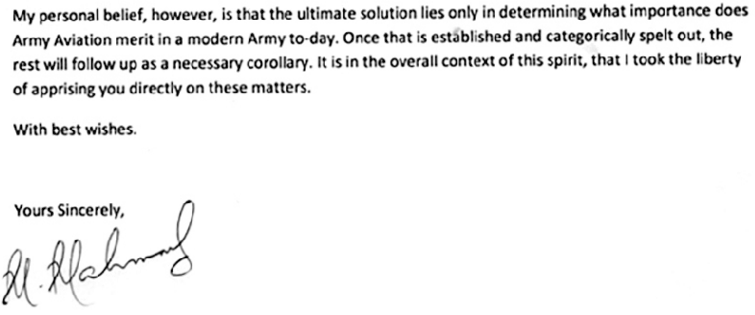


him! If this contribution is accepted and acknowledged, then the Army Aviators must get equal openings for career advancement and suitable job assignments. However, if the considered opinion of the Army's policy is to the contrary, then it must be clearly specified, so that the qualified Aviator's know where they stand and should have the option to decide as to whether they should continue serving in Army Aviation or to revert back to their parent arm.

The next important imponderable is the ever so complex and involved requirement of career management. The service in Army Aviation is governed entirely by service requirements and the pilots have very little discretion in planning it. Isn't it but fair then, that they should get the opportunity for rotation to their parent arms at appropriate service experience level, and if that is not possible it should not adversely affect the careers of these officers. I would like to mention that the most critical period is when the officer is due for his promotion to the rank of Lt Col and above. In all fairness to these officers, they should be given a reasonable period in the units during which they re-equip and refresh themselves in the required professional knowledge and then only they should be judged and reported upon for this critical report, just before their name comes up before the promotion board. The experience of the last 2-3 years indicates that eleven major's and three Lt Col's got no more than 3-6 months service in the unit, before they got this all important report with troops in their parent arm. Landing up in the units for only this short period, and that too with the prevalent climate in the units and formations which is not too favorably inclined towards the Army Aviator's, has its own justified and some unjustified prejudices; which has created a great dampening and demoralizing influence on these officers. Their minds are agitated with a conflict stemming from uncertainties and vagaries created by this somewhat diabolic situation that they find themselves in. I feel strongly that these officers must get a minimum period of one year if not more in the units, during which they refresh their basic knowledge of their arm and learn the handling and employment of sub-units/units. It is only then that their true professional ability can be judged.

In the grounding of the officers and in determining their qualifications and professional competence, the different courses and the experience in different staff appointments is given definite importance, and carries a great deal of weightage. The service in Army Aviation denies these officers the opportunity to attend or experience some of these. My question is to why should this be held against them? Instead, why their performance in both the wars should not be given its due recognition! Ultimately, that is the real test of a soldier.

A presentation on the forming of a separate Corps of Aviation is being made by the Army Aviation Directorate. It may find some partial answers to the queries' being raised herein, but will be no final answer to the career management of the Army Aviators. I am personally against 100% hard Corps of Army Aviation pilots as it will alienate all the bright officers. These officers lend a great deal in the final determination of the effectiveness of Army Aviation to the Army; through their professional competence they provide the Army its vital eyes to evaluate and determine real battlefield information. This becomes the battle winning factor and is dependent on these professional officers only, who can show both initiative and prowess of their military knowledge. And it is these officers who should not be denied the opportunity for their grooming to the higher ranks.



My personal belief, however, is that the ultimate solution lies only in determining what importance does Army Aviation merit in a modern Army to-day. Once that is established and categorically spelt out, the rest will follow up as a necessary corollary. It is in the overall context of this spirit, that I took the liberty of apprising you directly on these matters.

With best wishes.

Yours Sincerely,

I got no reply to my letter. But whatever forebodings and concerns that I had raised proved correct. I was also against the formation of hundred percent hard core officers in the emerging Arm of Army Aviation, but after I resigned in 1975, it was formed. Because of this, most of the bright officers left Army Aviation and returned to their parent arm. Luckily, this secured their promising career. This can be judged that from that small group, five attained the rank of Lieutenant General and out of those five, two held the key appointment of CGS. But the Army Aviation was denuded of all this talent. And obviously, since then, it could not be attracting the best officers. How adversely this will affect their performance in actual war is yet to be tested. But we broke the link of the professional army aviator and the technocrat of a pilot. It was this blend that performed in 1965 and 1971 war, because they as professional officers read the battle situation aptly and could react timely and whatever action was suitably required they acted and had it implemented. I cannot bemoan about it now as it is a fait accompli.

Brigadier (Later Major General) Naseerullah Khan Babar had been severely wounded during the war. He was Commander Artillery 23 Division, and the GOC was dynamic Major General Iftikhar Janjua. The 111 Brigade was commanded by Brigadier (Later General) Rahimud-Din, who was busy in the Court Martial of Mujeeb-ur-Rahman at Rawalpindi. Despite several messages of the GOC, he did not turn up to take his place in command of the Brigade in the concentration area. When the Division was committed to the operations in the Chamb Sector, Brigadier N.K. Babar was put in Command. He was leading the Brigade wearing his Peak Cap with its red Ribbons when a volley of artillery shells hit the area where they were proceeding in the attack. His left shoulder was shattered, and he was evacuated to CMH, Jhelum. The GOC died a few days later in a helicopter accident. It was a substantial loss. Some heads in the formation would have rolled had he remained alive. It was fortunate for those. Brigadier Babar had to have a series of operations and recovered, but since the bones in the left shoulder had been badly broken to small pieces, he could not get the full upward movement in his left arm. Lieutenant General Shaukat Hassan, the surgeon, attended him and took full care of his wounds. Even so, it was a liability he had for the rest of his life. To overcome this, he always carried his baton in the left hand.

When Brigadier Babar fully recovered, he was posted as Inspector General Frontier Corps (IGFC) with its Headquarters at Balahissar Fort at Peshawar. His command stretched from the Northern tip of Chitral going down to the Southern tip of Baluchistan, covering the entire Western Front of Pakistan. It was a very challenging job, and it suited the temperament and nature of the new incumbent. He was always on the move, actively in touch with all his area and getting to know the people. The Political Agent system along with the Tribal Malik's provided the administrative structure and had worked well. The Frontier Corps was to support the Political Agents and worked directly under the Governors of the provinces. But Brigadier Babar knew no barriers and restrictions and was using his full initiative to extensively travel around and directly cultivate his own contacts and friends in the area. He was also closely in touch with me, and he knew that he could count on the support of Army Aviation whenever and wherever so needed by him, without the hassles of permission from GHQ. And he fully used it.

Brigadier (Later Major General) M. Imtiaz, an Army Aviator, was the Military Secretary to the Prime Minister. He had kept close contacts with us. Through that, Babar got Mr Bhutto's interest in the ongoing trouble in our relationship with Afghanistan. Brigadier Babar had a true vision in the affairs of the Tribal Territories, because of its sensitivities and its impact in handling our contacts with Afghanistan. He always maintained that the people of Afghanistan have always been very friendly towards Pakistan and its people and it is the rulers of Afghanistan which have at times played a negative role. The next thing he wanted was the development of this very backward area. These two aspects he felt held the key to our future relationship with Afghanistan. It equally holds true even to-day. It was in this background that he got Mr Bhutto's attraction to this part of the region. A plan was made where the Prime Minister would undertake to visit the entire tribal belt of the NWFP Province, twice a year. Since a lot of helicopters support was required, so I too had to get intimately involved in all the plans and actual trips. As long as Babar was the IGFC, he insisted that I must come too, and I always obliged him. Actually, in retrospect, they were very educative. Even otherwise too, he would get me to come to Peshawar and to take him on many of those trips he was regularly making. He gained immensely in the area's knowledge and developed a lot of contacts, both within our areas and even across the border in Afghanistan. They have remained even loyal to him after his death, and some of them are still in regular touch with me. Though some very important Malik's have died, still the rest they all remember him and his services to the area.

I have already highlighted some details of those critical missions earlier. I need not repeat those again, but I can sum up by saying that we have had no one more qualified, knowledgeable and expert on FATA including Afghanistan, than Late Major General (Retd) N. K. Babar. He had a clear vision, excellent contacts and unlimited energy to forge the future of this most geo-strategically sensitive region of Pakistan. It is unfortunate that it was the leadership, both military and even political, that let him down always.

The life in the Army Aviation was becoming a routine after Babar left his post as IGFC to take over the command of an Infantry Brigade. Brigadier Imtiaz called me one day to find out my views whether the VIP Helicopter Puma, which had been already ordered by the Air Force, should be operated by the Army or the Air Force. The Army had a much larger fleet of helicopters and was more experienced in helicopter flying; I told him. He had already decided. He immediately responded that it must come to the Army rather than be operated by the Air Force. The decision having been taken; we sent the crews for training to France. All the VIP Flying in the helicopters has since been undertaken by the Army Aviation. By God's grace, there has been no accident, and the Army Aviation has kept a very proud and excellent record of its operational efficiency.

Mr Bhutto had also developed a closer affinity with Army Aviation, because of Brigadier Imtiaz, and also because of the many helicopter missions he took part in. On Brigadier Imtiaz's suggestion, he agreed to come to Army Aviation Base, Dhamial, for the award of Flying Brevets to the newly graduating officers from the Army Aviation School. It was quite a unique honour that the Prime Minister had opted to come himself for the graduating ceremony of the new pilots from Army Aviation School. It was the first and the last occasion that the Prime Minister came to Wings presentation ceremony for the Army Aviators. The occasion was also unique that we had the first batch of Naval Officers also graduating after completing their flying training with Army Aviation.

One incident of this occasion comes to my mind as rather unique and equally reflective of some of my indiscretion. The Puma helicopter had recently joined the fleet at the base and the ladies present on the occasion had requested for a brief flight on this after the official ceremonies were over. I had promised to do that. After the departure of all the guests, they approached me to arrange this flight as promised. I asked for Major (Later Brigadier) Tirmizi and Captain (Later Brigadier) Nasim, the Captain and Co-pilot to take them for this flight. I was told that they both have gone home and were not available at the Base. I was now in a quandary. The ladies were all pressing that I honour my commitment. In an impulsive decision I asked for the helicopter to be brought on the tarmac along with the technical crew of the helicopter. Though I had not qualified as a pilot on Puma, but had done a few sorties with the original crew and felt confident that I could operate it. The ladies were all put on board and I sat at the pilot's seat. I did not know how to start it and so asked the ground crew to do it for me. With that done, I took off and took the ladies for a sightseeing trip. We had a pleasant trip and came back to safely land the helicopter.

While the helicopter was on this flight, the Captain and the Copilot saw this sitting in their homes. They were wondering as to how the helicopter was flying without its proper crews! They both came rushing back to the Base to inquire. As they arrived they saw me alight out of the helicopter. They were looking at me in disbelief and asked how I did this. I had to calm them down that it was my decision. Luckily, all was well. I honoured my commitment, and the sortie ended successfully.

Another occasion where the ladies had a ride on Puma helicopter was when we did its test flying in high altitude and hot weather conditions. To do that, we planned a trip to Gilgit, Hunza, Khunjrab Pass and other operational areas. For this, some ladies including my wife were invited to make its full payload. It was a very enjoyable trip. I used no indiscretion of mine, and we had the trained professional crew to handle this.

General Tikka Khan had been our instructor at PMA, and also I started my career as a gunner in 12 Medium Regiment at Peshawar, a unit which he was commanding. I was always very free and candid with him. He always showed a lot of respect and understanding of my views. We hoped that with his taking over as COAS he will always listen to sincere and honest advice being given to him for all improvements and betterments in the Army, as these were so badly needed. One day in GHQ at a function, he was very proudly saying that he had ordered the local production of 2000 Nishan Jeeps. I could not help control myself, as I knew that he had been misled by some sycophants and a group of officers with some vested interest. I snapped, ”Sir, which jeeps you are talking about. It is only a myth and not a reality.” He was not annoyed at my remarks but looked rather surprised. His reply was that did I not see the two Nishan Jeeps at the Parade. I had to again tell him very bluntly, “Do you know the story how those were built!” “You tell me,”he said. I answered by telling him, “Is it in your knowledge that in a little workshop in some remote area of Lahore, some ten engines were cast? Two of those came close to the specifications. They put some rings and sleeves in them to make them work and produced those two engines. For how long these engines will run, have a big question mark around it? Will you build 2,000 engines on that pattern and type?”He was rather taken aback, but said, “I have myself seen those engines being built in that workshop in Lahore.” Without mincing my words, I had to tell him, “Sir, you have been taken for a ride. Did anyone give you the details of the ad hoc manner in which these engines were built? Can these be the basis ever for a large-scale manufacturing?” There was a general silence all over in the group present, which included senior officers from EME. It was only interrupted by General Tikka Khan himself, who said, “You know Abdullah Malik told me the same thing yesterday.” It was heartening to see that he was still amenable to all sincere advice and even criticism. He had the order cancelled to save himself the embarrassment and the loss to the Army.

I have earlier mentioned the incident of leave being granted by me to the Subedar Major of Hamidi’s Regiment. One day I was astonished to receive a letter from COAS admonishing me and to inform me of his severe displeasure, in that I showed lack of character qualities in allowing the leave to the JCO when the GHQ policy had laid down no leave. I was infuriated! I was wondering at the character quality of the GOC, who despite my discussing this point with him when I was leaving 33 Division, and he had expressed no concern at that time. It transpired that he held an inquiry on this incident and the inquiry officer held me responsible for this. The GOC, having agreed with that opinion had sent the inquiry to Adjutant General at GHQ for further action. The Adjutant General recommended that severe displeasure of COAS should be communicated to me for this lack of character qualities. He had the letter so written, got signed from COAS. I wrote back directly to COAS. In that I mentioned this displeasure has been communicated to me without me being given an opportunity to clear my position. I also wrote that if an officer’s character is in question; his presence in the Court of Inquiry is a must. Having stated that, I questioned the COAS's displeasure and his remarks; in which it was conveyed to me I had shown a lack of character qualities. I also wrote that I used my command prerogative to allow one JCO just a few day's leave. General Tikka Khan realized the impropriety of his letter and he had that cancelled and I was conveyed an official confirmation to that. It is believed that COAS had his displeasure conveyed to the Adjutant General and Major General Iqbal, GOC 33 Division, for the way inquiry was held and their recommendations for this letter of displeasure. I mentioned this to again bring out the openness of General Tikka Khan as a person and to also reflect in his accepting any genuine criticism.

Another intimate discussion that we had worth mentioning is the one we had on board the flight from Dhamial to Quetta. In a cheerful mood and with no other serious topic to discuss he told me, "Mahmud, you know that PMA has produced two excellent courses, The First IMA/PMA Long Course and yours First PMA Long Course." I knew his association with the IMA/PMA course from the days of Dehra Dun, where he was their instructor. But I still had to reflect and tell him, "Sir, it is an insult to us to be compared to IMA/PMA Course." He was rather taken aback, and said, "No, both courses were excellent. Showing his soft spot for IMA/PMA Course, he interjected, "They were slightly better than your course." This really hit me. I had to tell him a little loudly and bluntly, "You are really insulting our course. There is hardly any comparison. We hate to even think that they come even anywhere close to us" He had a slight smile on his face and said,"Why do you say so? What is the criterion?" I asked him to layout his criteria, but he left it to me to describe! Since I had to define the basis of comparison and the criteria for it, I suggested that we may start with the promotion to the rank of Brigadier; 62 of us had passed the course and out of those 36 had become Brigadiers. When I asked him to compare, he eventually nodded in acknowledgement. Having driven home the point, I said that the next things we could compare are the appointments held. All the key appointments in the Army were held by officers from our course: The DMO, the DMI, Chief Instructor Staff College, Quetta, IGFC at Peshawar and Base Commander of the only Army Aviation Base, Dhamial. He again approvingly nodded his head. And finally what mattered the most, the gallantry awards. I told him that we had one Nishan-e-Haider and three SJ's from our course, and they had only one SJ to show and that too with dubious credibility.Either they stayed away from war, or those who participated have nothing much to write home about. The only SJ was because of some personal lobby by the recipient rather than any act of valour. He listened very patiently, but with a meaningful smile, he tried to sum up by saying, “No, your course is superb. But they were a little better than you.” I could not let this go unchallenged. I immediately retorted, Sir, now that you have really touched the most sensitive nerve of our pride, let me tell you they were a bunch of cut throats. They wouldn’t spare anyone when it suited their personal interest and career.” To reinforce the point, I had to remind him as to how they betrayed their own course mate GC Nazir Ahmad when he absented himself from PMA without leave. I don’t know if I won the argument at that time, but to his credit some years later when I went to call on him after he had retired, he spontaneously remembered and said, “Yes, you were right they are a bunch of cut throats.” Obviously, he was saying so now, because some from that course had him arrested during the Martial Law of General Zia-ul-Haq.

It was in the summer of 1974 that the Government launched operations in the Maiwand area of Baluchistan. Since a lot of helicopters were involved, so I went there to take some part in the operations. We spent the night at the Sibi rest house. It was so hot that we could not even get a wink of sleep. Early next morning, when the operation was launched, all the helicopters were up in the air as part of those operations. Since I was not directly involved, I was just flying in the Alouette helicopter to generally monitor the situation. As we were nearing Maiwand, I saw that our ground troops had not reached there. But in the small town, there were some people gathered and were looking at our helicopter. I landed and got down to see what the activity was about. Soon the others joined in. As I came out of the helicopter, an elderly person with a white beard came forward and approached us. He had a simple message to give, “The people that you have come looking for are not here. They have taken to the hills.” In the further discourse that developed, he and some others just summed up the situation on the ground in their areas. They held no love for the Sirdar or the Sirdari System. They have no choice but to accept it. Under this, whatever they produce, the Sirdar owns half of it. And he determines what his share is rather than work it out on actual yields. In the meantime, the Corps Commander, Lieutenant General A.B. Awan, also landed and started taking part in the discussions. They summed up by saying, “If you have come, then plan to stay permanently. If you leave, then we will be again at the mercy of our Sirdar. And in that event, we cannot afford to annoy him.” This was a coherent message then, and equally applicable in today’s Baluchistan. The common man must be freed from the clutches of the Sirdari System and emancipated. He needs development to improve his quality of life from the cave age that they are living in. I was thoroughly exhausted by then. Since I had to go to Paris, the next day for Paris Air Show, I flew back to Jacobabad, rested and was picked up by the U8F Aircraft, which arrived from Dhamial.

Sibi to Paris was some change. The Air Show by the French is well organised and perhaps one of the best and well represented Air Shows. While at the Air Show, I met the Saudi Team attending it. In fact, two officers from Saudi Arabia introduced themselves to me. One was Major Abdul Rahman, who was from Armoured Corps and the other one was Flight Lieutenant Faisal, from the Air Force. In the first meeting, they never gave the impression that they were from the Royal Family and behaved just like very ordinary and straightforward officers of their Armed Forces. But the conducting officer later told me they both were the Sons of King Faisal. Soon, it became routine for us to be together all the time. During our two weeks stay, we went together to almost all the functions. To their credit, they had no air of the Royal Family connections and behaved like well-groomed officers who showed much affection and love for Pakistan. I was touched by their simplicity and sincerity, but they mentioned nothing about their royal links. Our staying together even attracted the attention of the conducting officers and they remarked why we want to move together always. Prompt came the reply from Major Abdur Rehman, who was the elder of the two brothers, “Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are like brothers, and hence we have that close affinity.”

In our discussions, they both were keen to know my views about building up their Army Aviation, besides talking about their future programs, about their developments of their Armour units and the built up of the Air Force. Since they were behaving as simple officers of the Armed Forces of Saudi Arabia, I too was interacting nonchalantly with them. We had a very pleasant stay in Paris. In fact, so much so I was moving independently of the Pakistan delegation, which was led by Chief of the General Staff, Major General M. Rahim Khan. As the stay at Paris was ending, I told them I plan to go to London for a few days and then on return I was performing Umra. This immediately attracted the attention of Major Abdul Rahman, and he said that I must inform him about my plan for Umra. He further said that when I finalize my travel plan, I should just call the Saudi Defense Attaché in London and give him my Flight Number.

For the Umra, I had made my own arrangements. My friend Riaz Ahmad had his office in Jeddah, and they were taking care of my reception and all the related details of my stay and going to Mecca for Umra. While I was still in London, I thought that I should, for courtesy’s sake, call the Saudi Embassy, and tell the Defense Attaché about my flight details as desired by Major Abdul Rahman. After that, I forgot all about it. When the flight arrived in Jeddah, I was not expecting any reception arrangements other than the people from Riaz's office, who were to meet me in the arrival lounge. I got down from the plane and went straight to the waiting bus to take the passengers to the terminal. As I boarded the bus, there was a flurry of activity. Some Saudi personnel in their flowing robes came running and jumped into the bus and calling my name repeatedly. As I answered, "Yes, I am Brigadier Mahmud." They were most apologetic and said, "Sorry Sir, we did not recognise you. We have been sent by Prince Abdur Rahman for your reception. He was coming himself, but he had to accompany the king to the Hill Station Taif and as such could not do so." For the first time, I realised the importance of the Prince in the Saudi hierarchy. I told them I have my own arrangements and people are waiting for me in the arrival lounge. Their answer was that they cannot accept any other arrangement and that I must go with them. They left me with no other alternative. They took me to the arrival lounge, and I met the people from Riaz's office and told them that I have to cancel all the arrangements made by them as Prince Abdur Rahman had sent his people for my reception and to take care for my Umra. They gave me a real royal protocol. I was taken to Red Sea Palace Hotel where I was put up in the Royal Suite. Here, I changed for the Umra and went to Mecca. On return, I went off to sleep, and as I was preparing to pack up for my flight back to Pakistan later in the evening, I got the message that the Prince will be coming to see me the next day. I had to politely decline the opportunity to meet with him again as I had no more leave left and had to take the flight back home in the evening. I subsequently made several visits to Saudi Arabia for Umra and even Haj, but despite trying could not find the contact to meet with Prince Abdur Rahman Bin Faisal. I even contacted the Saudi Arabia Defense Attaché in Pakistan, and he promised me to help. When I reached Madina, I got a call from him to confirm that the meeting had been arranged in Riyadh and that after Umra I should go there to meet with him. On the appointed time and day, when I reached the address given to me, I found that the meeting had been fixed with Prince Abdul Rahman Bin Abdul Aziz, who was their Defense Minister. I had to tell his staff that I did not know him and that I was looking for Prince Abdul Rahman bin Faisal, the meeting was cancelled, and I got no further help as to how to contact him. This looked rather strange. On my return to Pakistan, when I told all the details to the Saudi Defense Attaché, he realised that the meeting that he had arranged was with the wrong man. He promised to help me contact the right person, but it never materialised. I have kept wondering the reason for this ever since. Maybe he is not in the good books of the current people in power after the death of his father. Prince Faisal became well known as he became the Foreign Minister, but I was never inclined to contact him as it was his elder brother who had shown a more affectionate sense of attachment with me.

The L-19 aircraft were now ageing, and we were looking for a possible replacement for it. The US Army Aviation had converted to hundred percent helicopter configurations and thus had no fixed-wing aircraft equivalent in their fleet as a replacement for L-19. We could not afford this change as it was very expensive and had to look for a suitable aircraft somewhere else. The best aircraft that I had seen at the Paris Air Show was the Italian Siai Marchetti, which had a turbine engine. Its performance was fantastic and could operate from strips even shorter from those required for L-19. But being a turbine engine aircraft was very expensive, as much as the cost of a light helicopter. So grudgingly, we had to look elsewhere. The Scandinavian aircraft, Saab MF-17, appeared to be the next best choice. We asked them to bring it to Pakistan, to test it in hot and high altitude flying conditions. Our main reservation was that it needed a little longer strip to operate, as compared to 250 yards long strip for L-19 aircraft. The Pakistan Air Force was also looking for a light aircraft for their initial and basic training of pilots. It was fully aerobatic and as such it met the basic requirement of PAF. As I was still churning it over in my mind as to what decision we may take regards our choice, I got a call from Air Chief Marshal Zufikar Ali Khan to come over to Air Headquarters, Peshawar, for a discussion. When I met him, I told him about our reservations. He understood those, but he said from the point of view of the Air Force it was also not an ideal aircraft either, but since it met its basic requirement, he was inclined to accept it. He told me I may look at it from that point of view. On return I again reviewed this with all the other officers involved in its evaluation, and we concluded that since no other better choice seemed available, we may have to also accept some compromise in its take- off and landing run. And this we did, and I called PAF Chief the next day to inform him of our decision. While I did that, I also suggested to him that since the numbers may be large enough, we may consider the assembly and later the manufacture of this in Pakistan. He perhaps was already thinking on those lines and readily agreed to my suggestion. I also told him I believe we already have some machinery available for this job at Dhamial; we may undertake this project there. He also agreed to this suggestion. But next day, when I broached the subject with Brigadier Saeed Qadir, who had now moved to Directorate of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (DEME) at GHQ, I was rather surprised to learn that he was rather reluctant to undertake this job. All along when engineering support for the expanding Army Aviation requirements was being planned, manufacturing a light aircraft and helicopter was a part of their charter, and all jigs, tools and machinery for it had been catered. I was in no mood to get into any controversy on this and decided that we hand it over to the PAF. The next day when I called ACM Zulfikar to advise him of my decision, he was too willing to accept this project in the Air Force domain. I also told him that whatever machinery we may have available, I will be too willing to hand it over to PAF. He said there will be no need for that, as the project will be examined and tasked to meet all the requirements. That is how Kamra Base of PAF came into existence. We had our small and humble role in its foundations being laid. They were earlier to undertake the assembly and manufacture Saab MFI-17 aircraft, which was renamed as Mishak, but have since proudly expanded and are now the manufacturers of the most modern JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft. This I would subscribe to essentially the vision of ACM Zulfikar and all credit is due to him. Some Army Aviators had reservations about the performance of Saab MFI17 aircraft, as it needed little longer strips to operate. But the question was as to where to find an equivalent of L-19? Sometimes later after I had retired, General Sowar Khan, Vice Chief of Army Staff, broached the subject with me. I had to tell him that even in hindsight, if some other aircraft more suitable than Saab MFI- 17 is available, it may be considered. But there was none, and so the choice stayed at that. It has since been improved and Super Mishak is now in production, and some countries have also placed orders for that. I am glad that the project was taken to a successful conclusion.

For the overhaul of the Russian Helicopters MI-8, they had to be flown to Russia as no facilities were available in Pakistan. On one mission where the helicopter was being flown back to Pakistan from Tiblisi, from where we were doing the handing over and taking over from the Russian crews, we encountered very serious problems. The pilot, Lieutenant Colonel (Later Brigadier) S.L.A. Bokhari, while filing his flight plan from Tiblisi to Mashad, our first port of landing in Iran; no briefing of any adverse weather en route was given to him. As the helicopter was approaching the hills south of Tiblisi, it encountered foul weather where the cloud base was very low and there were strong winds. With great difficulty the Captain cleared the hills and started on his course to Mashad. He probably deviated a little from his flight path. As he was flying very low because of the cloud base, this further aroused the Russian suspicions and they scrambled their fighter aircraft. The fighters were warning the

Captain of the helicopter to proceed towards Yerevan instead of going to Mashad. But the weather was so bad that the pilot did not consider it prudent to do any more diversions. Since the helicopter was not diverting to Yerevan, the Russian pilots warned the helicopter pilot that they will shoot it down if he does not act as being told. Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari was in a great quandary. The weather was terrible, and more so towards Yerevan, that he thought it not prudent to divert in that direction and kept flying towards Mashad. He was conveying the Russian pilots his problems and concerns, but apparently they could not understand much English and kept warning the pilot about being shot down if he did not divert. In all this confusion the Captain kept flying towards Mashad, his destination, and luckily the Russian pilots did not shoot it down. He thus safely flew into the Iranian airspace and felt relieved.

It was a very serious incident and luckily no mishap was caused, but I wanted to have it resolved. Also, some matters on the overhauling procedures needed to be streamlined, so I undertook the next trip with the crews myself. I asked the COAS for his permission and he readily agreed to it. Since again we had to fly back the helicopter after its overhaul, we proceeded to Moscow in a commercial flight direct. Brigadier Shirazi, who was our Defense Attaché at Moscow, was there to receive us. On meeting me he told me that that he had received this complaint about the incident on one of the previous flights from Aero Spatiale, the company undertaking the overhaul, and we needed to resolve it satisfactorily. The meeting had been fixed for the next day. While dropping me at the hotel, he warned me I should be careful and not exchange any Dollars for the Russian Currency Ruble on the streets or elsewhere. If I needed to do that, he would do so from some other Embassy, who get the Rubles in the diplomatic bags. Luckily, because of this warning, I was careful. The next day as I walked out of the hotel, I was surrounded by young children asking for foreign cigarettes. Since I was carrying none, I could not oblige them. A little further away I was accosted by some elderly people and they started asking if I wanted to exchange Dollars for Rubles. I firmly told them No. It was a serious offence, and I was glad that they had forewarned me.

While proceeding for the meeting, Brigadier Shirazi, briefed me that the area south of hills close to Tiblisi was a very sensitive area of the Russians, as they had many of their missile sites located there. It was for this reason that they were very sensitive to any helicopter flying so low over it. At the meeting with Aero Spatiale, the first point they raised was the incident of this flight of MI-8. They told me Pakistan is the only

Country whose crews may fly in their helicopter in the Russian airspace at such low altitudes, and this was a sensitive matter with them. I had to give them the circumstances under which the Captain of the helicopter was and that because of the adverse weather; he was in no position to divert to Yerevan. It apparently satisfied them, but they suggested that in future they will change the port of handing over/ taking over of the helicopters to Yerevan. When I asked them about the visit of our crews to St Petersburg (Leningrad), for the inspection of the helicopter, I was advised that we will have to wait for a little while because of non- availability of suitable hotel accommodation there. For the next few days, I kept asking them regularly about our travel to St Petersburg, but invariably the answer was the same, wait. With the inordinate delay that was being caused, I lost my patience and arranged for the crews to be booked to travel on their journey regardless of the approval of the Company. After the crews had boarded the aircraft, only then I informed them that our crews are already on board the flight and that they should make the arrangements for their reception. This upset them, but they had no other choice left to them. The next day Lieutenant Colonel Liaquat Bokhari, called me and informed me they had given them a very cold shoulder and authorities there were not cooperating with them. They had been accommodated in some shoddy barracks and were not provided with any transport. While I was still thinking of lodging a protest with their office in Moscow, that Bokhari called me to say that all has been sorted out and that there were no more any problems left. He also told me I was free to come to St Petersburg, whenever I so decide. When I inquired as to how all this happened so suddenly, he told me that he decided to take two bottles of whisky with him to the office of the Director of the Company where the helicopter was being overhauled, and as he placed those on his table in front of him, everything suddenly changed. He immediately provided them with good hotel accommodation and a machine (They referred to the car) placed at their disposal for 24 hours service. I was amazed at the deprivation of these people that for a price so small, they would readily agree to provide all the facilities!

While I was staying at Moscow, Brigadier Shirazi provided his staff car along with the driver to me to do all the sightseeing in Moscow. He had also warned me he was from KGB and that I needed to be very careful while dealing with him. He was too intelligent to be a driver and equally very resourceful. He arranged for all my bookings to all the important places of interest, like Bolshoi theatre, the Circus and the others, which were heavily booked. I was thrilled with those arrangements, but was equally careful in my conversation with him and particularly in answering his very intelligent questions. We struck a reasonable understanding. But still it was clear how much craving he had to know about the West and what life was like in those Countries!

Since all had been settled at the plant of the overhaul facilities at St Petersburg, I also flew there and held my discussions with the authorities. They gave me a VIP reception with excellent hotel accommodation, a car with the driver at my disposal and an interpreter only attached to me. I was also advised by Lieutenant Colonel Bokhari and Lieutenant Colonel (Later Major General) Farhat Ali Burki, that they had no problems on the overhaul of the helicopter and that they had changed many a part of the helicopter, without even charging for those. In the discussions also they were very accommodating and agreed to all our suggestions for streamlining the overhauling of the helicopters at their facilities. The interpreter was most inquisitive. He wanted me to share my experiences of the visits to all the modern and progressive Countries of the World and to seek as much knowledge about them as was possible. He asked me if I was carrying a shortwave radio with me. He told me that in Russia no short wave radio is available for the people to listen to the outside world. He was very critical of their life and even about their technology. When I would console him it is not all bad and gave him the example of the MI-8 Helicopter, he would say it is all a copy of the Western Technology and that it was only a fluke. Since I realized that he was very genuine about his inquiries, I handed him over my radio. He was most grateful. It was all highlighting the deprivations of that society and I was left wondering how long it will take them to learn and when the change will come in that society!

The stay in St Petersburg got us an excellent opportunity to visit some of their most interesting and historical places. The Hermitage Museum, which is the World's largest, offered a lot to see and could consume days. The Czar's summer palace, a short distance from St Petersburg, was an exquisite place to visit. The entire setting was so realistic that it appeared as if the Czar was still living in it and may appear any moment. The visit here was most fruitful and interesting. Since the Russian crew was to fly the helicopter to Yerevan, from where we had to take over and fly it back to Pakistan, we flew back to Moscow. The exchange of Dollars to Rubles, at three Rubles to one Dollar, against the official rate of one Dollar to one Ruble, had been arranged by Brigadier Shirazie through some Embassy. At that rate, the purchase of best quality Cuban Cigars was most cheap, and I bought an abundance stock to give to my friends in Pakistan.

We tied our flight to Yerevan with the arrival of helicopter there, and then our crew flew it back to Pakistan via Iran. Flying so slow and low too, we had an excellent view of the ground below and I was realizing why this air space was so critical to the Russians. Luckily, there were no further mishaps, and all our scheduled flights continued smoothly. After stopping at Mashhad, Teheran and Isphahan, we arrived back to Pakistan. At Isphahan I met the Commander Iranian Army Aviation. We had excellent relationship with them as we enjoyed close co-ordination with each other. The overall visit nearly took one month. I don't know what contributions I made, but personally for me it was both pleasant and educative.

It was in June 1975 that two of the gunner officers of our course were given the Command of an Infantry Brigade. Our course was coming due for consideration for promotion to the rank of Major General, and it was a big step in their career. I was wondering what was in store for my career advancement. Rather than think too much about it, I figured it was the time that I put in my resignation again. I just wrote a two- line letter of resignation in which I said that I have lost all interest in the Army Career and would resign. The next day, The Military Secretary, Major General (Later Lieutenant General) Faiz Ali Cistie came to the Base Headquarter, Dhamial, and said that he had been sent to me personally by the Chief of the Army Staff. " The old man is very annoyed and upset with you, and has asked me to bring you to him immediately", he said. I accompanied him in his car and when we reached the office of COAS, General Tikka Khan just smilingly told me, "What is wrong with you this time?" I said, "There is nothing wrong with me. As I stated in my letter of resignation, I have no more interest left in my Army Career, and therefore, I want to resign." He suddenly became solemn and said, "You have always been very stubborn. You have resigned and expect me to give you my answer." Without waiting for my reaction, he tore my letter of resignation and threw it in the trash bin, saying, "This is my answer to it." I was very upset. I told him, "Sir, you have not done the right thing. I did not want to get into any discussion or debate over it. Now you have forced me to give you another more comprehensive letter of resignation in which I will give my detailed reasoning why I want to resign from the Army." And with these brief words, I left the room.

As I arrived in my office, I began writing the detailed letter of resignation. After giving a brief background of my previous two letters of resignation in 1971, I wrote that I hoped and expected that some of those weaknesses that I had highlighted would be addressed. Unfortunately, rather than correcting those, it seems to me that the career planners are adamant to give their lopsided emphasis to the staff experience rather than the battlefield performance or the command experience of the officers for the higher promotions. I wrote a three-page letter of resignation. The essence of that could be summed up in one sentence, in which I wrote, "It seems to me that the route to higher promotions in this Army is through the corridors of staff rather than the test of the Battlefield." When my fourth letter of resignation reached GHQ, I was again summoned to the office of COAS. This time the Military Secretary was not there. It was a oneto- one meeting between General Tikka Khan and me.

During my several meetings with him in my association of some 26 years, for the first time, I was not at ease. He started off by saying, "Are you worried about your promotion?" My clear and emphatic answer was, "No, I am not worried about my promotion. It is the entire system of promotion to the higher echelons of Command that I am questioning." He gave a rather evasive reply and said, "I guarantee you that you will be promoted." My response was again simple and straightforward, "It is not my promotion, which is a matter of concern. It is the criteria for higher promotions that are at fault, and I feel strongly that it needs to be addressed and corrected." I followed up by saying, "You are promoting officers who either deliberately avoided taking part in both the wars or otherwise had dismal performance to show on the field of battle." I wished that Major General Iftikhar Janjua had been living to illustrate the point. He had identified some of those and was very vocally cursing some of them. I instead had to mention some of those names. His answer again came as a surprise to me. He suggested that when the selection board approves my name, I would be given the Command of an Infantry Brigade. I told him what matters is that in higher Command only actual, professional soldiers should be promoted. It seemed that the officers, who would be the yes men to the opinion of the senior officers, could give no sincere and logical advice of their own and were ready to compromise on all issues, were the prime choices for higher promotions in the Army, currently. It had damaged the Army enough. It was a corrupt point system developed by some vested interests in the Military Secretary's Branch, which was at work. The staff was given a rating of 15 Points as compared to 5 Points for command. General Tikka Khan was not perturbed and remained calm, but would answer none of the points that I had raised. Nor would he give any reply to my letter of resignation. I was now getting this distinct feeling that since he had commanded the Army for over three years, he had begun to think and suffer from an illusion that he had put everything right in the Army and was not listening to any differing opinion. This is not how I knew him! It was on this ambiguous note that the meeting ended.

This rot had been clearly started by General Ayub Khan and was further allowed to perpetuate itself through coaction of General Musa with General Ayub Khan. I had earlier very vociferously and directly told General Yahya of these weaknesses at our higher command, and he was in full accord with it. One had hoped that when he assumed the coveted position of C-in-C, he will make amends and correct this curse that had been inflicted on this Army, but he failed totally. In General Gul Hassan, we had the highest of hopes to modal the command structure of this Army to ensure that the best reach the top. He was fully cognizant of the need for it. In his "Memoirs"he has dilated in some details, but I will quote only relevant and appropriate enunciations, "My criticism of the high command may appear to be severe and perhaps unjustified, but I have contrived it to be so."He has further elaborated, "Our leadership at Brigade and lower levels by and large was most credible. These were the commanders who fought side by side with their troops and the outcome bore testimony to the fact that that they were wanting in neither skill nor courage. That this was so, despite the drudgery they were exposed to before the war, and the lack of guidance during it, speaks volumes for their performance. And the deeds of our junior officers and men were second to none. They were filled with unprecedented determination and opposed an enemy many times their number with the resolve that they must defend their home land. They rose to the call of duty, and beyond, which was incontrovertibly demonstrable. The same cannot be said for our leadership at divisional level and above, though there were the rare exceptions." I may not agree with perhaps his liberal description of Brigadiers, but otherwise it was an apt assessment how this Army had fought in both the wars under this incompetent higher command. I had seen it and observed it very closely right amid the operations and fully concur with this opinion. It is a pity that General Gul Hassan did not get the time to address this failing in the Army. General Tikka Khan did not come equal to the expectations to address these shortcomings. I have already given my views as to why do I say that. But General Zia-ul-Haq had totally betrayed this Army and had taken the promotion process to absolute limits of absurdity. I hope we had time to ponder and reflect on this key aspect and rectified this most serious failing!

Rather than get an answer to my letter of resignation, I received my posting order as Director Army Aviation at GHQ. It sounded very odd. Every day I would call Lieutenant Colonel (Later Lieutenant General) Ahmad Kamal, the Military Secretary to COAS, and tell him to put my resignation on top of the mail being sent to COAS and every day he would say that it had come back at the bottom of the mail unsanctioned. This game went on for some over six months. Then one-day General Tikka Khan called me to his office. He was in a better mood than when I met him last time. He said, "You are very adamant as always. I cannot correct you, and reluctantly I am accepting your resignation." I thanked him for that. He then asked me what the Army could give me. I told him I want nothing. He again asked if I wanted any agricultural land or a plot in any Cantonment. My answer to him was again in the negative. Then smilingly he told me that since I had resigned, I cannot get the pension. I said I wanted no pension. To this, he stated that he had listened to me enough. He said, "On this point, I will not hear another word. I am retiring you with full pension benefits." I thanked him. Four resignations and six months in the waiting, I had got what I set about to do. It was the unique case in the Army. I had joined the Army as a passion and since that had been taken out; I felt no desire to continue serving in the Army anymore. It was on this note that my Military Career ended. I was one of the original founder members of the Couldn't Pull On (CPO) Club at PMA. In reflection, I wondered how I lasted in the Army for that long.

Lieutenant Colonels Faiz Brandon and Ghalib, who were our associates in Army Aviation and close friends, had retired earlier. Faiz was working in a private Aerial Spray Company in Pakistan. And he was advising us we should form one of our own. Our mutual friend Zafar agreed to provide the bulk of the finances for it. We also chipped in with some small contributions and International Aviation Services was raised. At this stage, I was thinking of where to settle down. I had earlier given no thought to it. My family belonged to Lahore, and most of my relatives lived there.

My father had also built a house in one of the first sectors to be developed in Islamabad. The G/6 Sector on Embassy Road started with just six or seven houses in it, and ours was one of those. I thought of moving in there, but then, most of my friends were living in Rawalpindi, and it still was the centre of the twin cities. So I bought a plot in Rawalpindi. Faiz and Ghalib also joined in. Faiz and I bought a four Kanal plot from Major General Muzaffar-ud-din, for Forty-Five Thousand Rupees, to be shared between us. Ghalib bought one just close to it. Later, Faiz settled in Karachi and sold his plot, but Ghalib and I built our houses in the Westridge-1 locality. Even we were wondering why and how this practice of allotting land to the Army officers in the Cantonments ever started. It was Ayub Khan who allotted himself two plots in Abbottabad, and it soon became a routine but was still manageable. There was no significant greed for allocations of land (agricultural, residential, and even Commercial) as there is now. It seems to have become all a legitimised form of corruption. For residential areas, best localities are being picked and then choicest plots allotted to the selected few. When General Tikka Khan was to retire, no land was left in Westridge-1 area and Westridge-11 Scheme had been floated. He got himself a plot allotted in that and made a modest house. The furnishings were again from the old days when he was a Lieutenant Colonel in Peshawar. Generals Yahya and Gul Hassan had earlier set the same pattern and example. I wished that it had been continued. This greed of the following senior officers has given the Army a bad name.

The International Aviation Services was hurriedly raised, and it went into action undertaking aerial spray over cotton crop area even in the season of 1976, the same year that I retired. We did continuous work for three years in Pakistan. Brigadier (Retd) M. Saleem Ullah had been made in charge as Faiz fell sick and left for Karachi. Major (Retd) Ikram Sehgal, whom I had earlier got dismissed, came to see me. He gave me his explanation of the events of 1971 in East Pakistan. He told me that some people in Army Aviation had deliberately twisted facts and had blamed him for some actions of Mukti Bahini in Chittagong and in Dhaka. His explanations appeared very satisfactory. He said that he was severely in need of a job and I obliged. He too worked very well. The aerial spray of the cotton crop was done only in those areas where the fields were open and large contiguous cotton crop grown. It naturally been the areas of the big landlords. And since the aerial spray was being provided by the Government free of all costs, this class was the sole beneficiary. This was creating resentment in the minds of the small farmers.

I was a regular Golf player since 1960. In 1976, after I retired from the Army, Colonel Donald L. Blottie of the US Army was also a frequent player and we got to know each other well. He was the Army Attaché at the United States Embassy, Islamabad. We played golf together as a regular foursome and got to know each other well, and in fact became splendid friends. I would visit his house regularly, and he too would come often to my house. Sometimes, he would missing for a few days, and on his return to the Golf Course, when I would ask him where he had been, he very often would say that he had gone to Multan. Of his visit to Multan, he would invariably mention that he met the Corps Commander, Lieutenant General Zia-ul-Haq. To further show his familiarity with him, he would say that he played Tennis with him. I had not heard his name in my Army life and was not at all familiar with him. One day that I was visiting Major General (Later Lieutenant General) Saeed Qadir, who was the QMG, I saw a Lieutenant General in Pakistani Uniform, sitting in his office. Since I did not recognise him, I made no conversation with him. Saeed Qadir saw this and remarked, “Don’t you know each other.” I answered in the negative, and after he had made the introductions, Lieutenant General Zia said that he had heard about me. I was also reminded about Colonel Blottie mentioning his name in connection with his visits to Multan. I still was not giving much importance to him and his name as he was the junior most Corps Commander. Also, he had not been in the limelight at all.

General Tikka Khan was about to retire, and names for his replacement were being considered. One day while playing golf, Colonel Blottie asked me who I thought would be the next COAS. At that time seven Lieutenant Generals were serving in the Army. I told him that the likely choice would be amongst the three or four senior most. He made no comment. A few days later he asked me the same question, and I gave the same reply but added that Lieutenant General Majid A. Malik is likely to be appointed as the new COAS, as we had heard that Mr Bhutto had told him so. I was rather surprised at his categorical negation of this inference. He said that General Zia- ul-Haq would be the next Army Chief. I asked him why he was so confident that this was the case, but he did not give me an answer.

One day Major General Babar, who was serving as GOC 14 Division at Okara, came over to my house as while on a visit to Rawalpindi. He spent the night with me and next morning after breakfast, he asked me to drive him to the house of Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Sagheer Hussain, who was the Military Secretary to the President. While en route, he told me that Lieutenant General Zia-ul-Haq is staying with him. He also said that he is being promoted as the new COAS and informed me he was being retired from the Army and appointed as the Governor of NWFP. The announcements for these new appointments are likely to be made today, he further told me. I was rather surprised at the name of the new Army Chief, as it was altogether unexpected. About Babar’s new assignment I could understand, there was a background to it. His work as IGFC had impressed Mr Bhutto and I could see the reason for that. But it was the name of the new army chief that was still on my mind, I could not figure out how Blottie knew about it in advance!

On arrival at the house of Brigadier Sagheer, we were very enthusiastically met by him, and he ushered us in. Lieutenant General Zia-ul-Haq was sitting perched on the sofa, looking enthusiastic. He greeted us very warmly, particularly addressing me as Mian Sahib. Apparently, he

Hermitage in the background, author is on the right, St. Petersburg.

Hermitage in the background. The author is 2nd from left. St. Petersburg.

A view of the hermitage across the River, author is second from the left,
St. Petersburg.

MAMTA
GOLF CLUB
KABIR WALA
INAUGURATED BY
AIR CHIEF MARSHAL
M.ZULFIKAR KHAN
RETD
ON

Inauguration of the Golf Course by ACM  Zulfikar Ali, Kabirwala.

View of the Golf Course, kabirwala.

Another View of the Golf Course, Kabirwala.

Golf Course at Kabirwala.

Munir Ahmad Khan, sitting in the middle, with a group of Ravians, with the author sitting left, Nathiagali.

Major General Ghulam Muhammad greeting Safdar and Babar, Kakul.

Maj Gen Ghulam Muhammad receiving the guests Kakul.

Maj Gen Ghulam Muhammad presenting a shield to Maj Gen N.K.Babar (Retd). Author is 5th from right. Kakul.

The group photograph of the course mates. Author is sitting 2nd from right front row, Kakul.

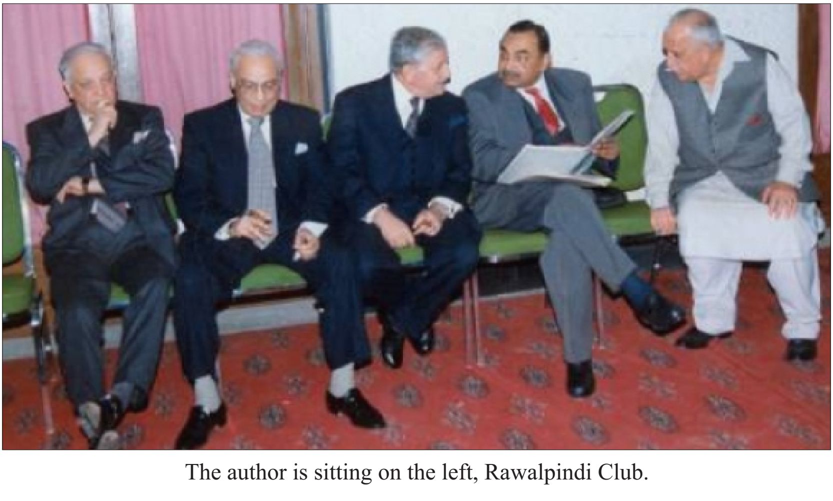
Visiting the Museum, PMA. The auther is 1st from left, Kakul.

The author is 2nd from left, PMA, Kakul.

The Course group photograph, author is seated 2nd from left Rawalpindi Club.

The author is seated second from right. Col S.G. Mehdi is on his right and on his left is Maj. Gen. Farman Ali, his instructors at PMA, Kakul Rawalpind Club.

Safdar Butt and Nasir Ullah Khan Babar, Rawalpindi Club.



The author is sitting on the left, Rawalpindi Club.

My wife Omera Mahmud in conversation with S.M. Akhtar, Rawalpindi Club.

The author is standing on left, Rawalpindi Club.

The author on the right, Rawalpindi Club.

## The Reunion

The author is sitting 2nd from left, Rawalpindi Golf Club.

The author is sitting 6th from left, Rawalpindi Golf Club.

Abdullah, Safdar and Zafar at Tarbela Dam, The Reunion.

My wife, Omera Mahmud playing Golf at Terbela Dam.

Th author is seated 3rd from right. Tarbela Dam.

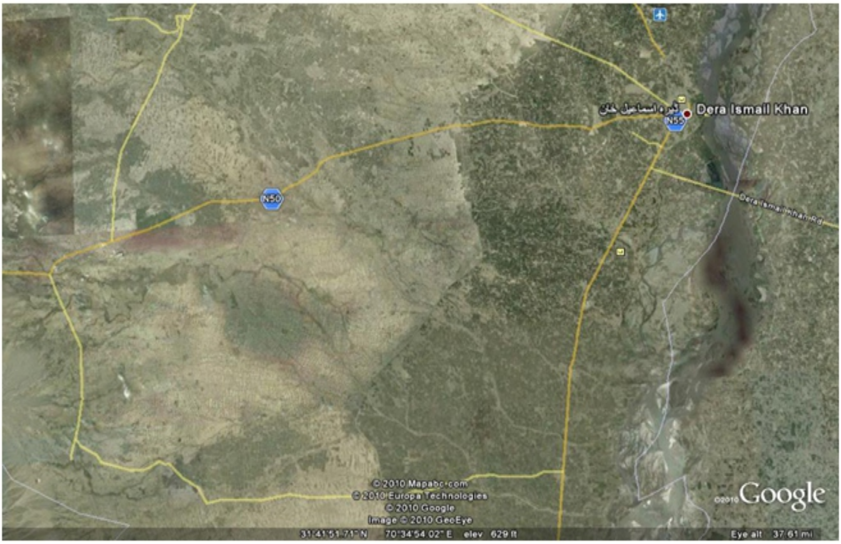
TARBELA DAM PROJECT

Safdar Butt giving briefing on Tarbela Dam.

The unveiling of the Golden Jubilee Monument, Kakul.

The unveiling of the Monument, author is 6th from the right, PMA, Kakul.

MOLECULAR STRUCTURED
WATER TREATMENT
PLANT
Filteration Plant at IDP Camp Mardan. The author is sitting in the centre. Mardan.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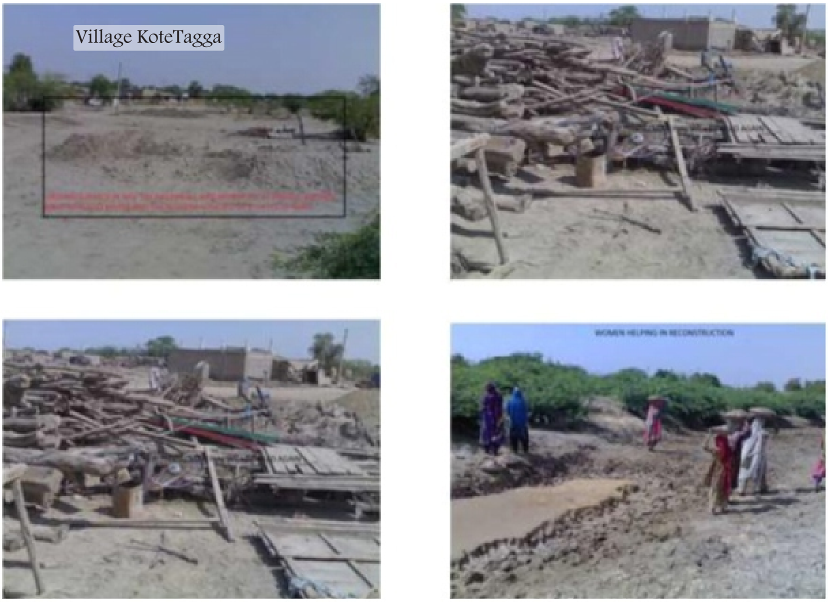

Village KoteTagga
WOMEN HELPING IN RECONSTRUCTION

The destruction at Kote Tagga, Only the mosque top right picture is intact. Kote Tagga.

Author, standing in the center, visiting Kote Tagga after the houses had been re-built.

The relief goods being distributed at Kote Tagga. The author is in the pictures.

AKISTAN
EX-SERVICEMEN
ASSOCIATION
PE

Air Chief Marshal Kaleem Saadat with first consignment for Bannu.
The author is 2nd from left, Rawalpindi.

Admiral Fasih Bokhari, along with Brigadier Simon, with relief consignment, Bannu.

Maj Gen N. K. Babar (Retd) with Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto at the shrine of Hazrat Zainab, Damascus.

The Staff at the start of the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul.

General Kiyani addressing the gathering.Kakul.

Diamond Jubilee
The Pioneers
Our Course mates with their wives and families.The author is also in the picture. Kakul.

Diamond Jubilee
The Pioneers
Our Course Mates with our instructor Lt Gen Majid Malik. Author is 6th from right. Kakul.

Diamond Jubilee
The Pioneers

The wives and families of our course mates. My wife Omera Mahmud is sitting left. Kakul.

The family of the author at the Monument of Golden Jubilee. My wife Omera Mahmud second from left.Kakul.

Author in the middle, sitting with Hamid Ali Noon and wife Omera Mahmud, Kakul.

Diamond Jubilee
The Pioneers

Author, second from right with his family at the monument, Kakul.

Author with his hand on the shoulder of Lt Gen Majid Malik his instructor, PMA, Kakul.

Author sitting left at dinner, with his wife Omera Mahmud and brother Zia-ul-haq.PMA, Kakul.

Major General Raheel Shareef with Lt Gen Majid Malik and other Guests, PMA, Kakul.

A View of the Gathering at the Dinner hosted by Major General Raheel Shareef, PMA, Kakul.

My son Akbar and his wife Mona with General Kiyan, PMA, Kakul.

General Kiyani after Unveiling of the Monument.The author is 4th from the right, PMA, Kakul

The author being introduced to General Kiyani. PMA, Kakul

TRIBUTE TO
A BRAVE SOLDIER
Major General Nasirullah Khan Babar
SJ & BAR, HILAL-E-SHUJAAT
(1928 - 2011)
PAKISTAN ARMY AVIATION V
RMY

Air Marshal M. Asghar Khan (Retd), Presiding the function. Author is 2nd from left, Islamabad Club.

My wife, Omera Mahmud, on the left with Mrs. Babar on her left, Islamabad Culb.

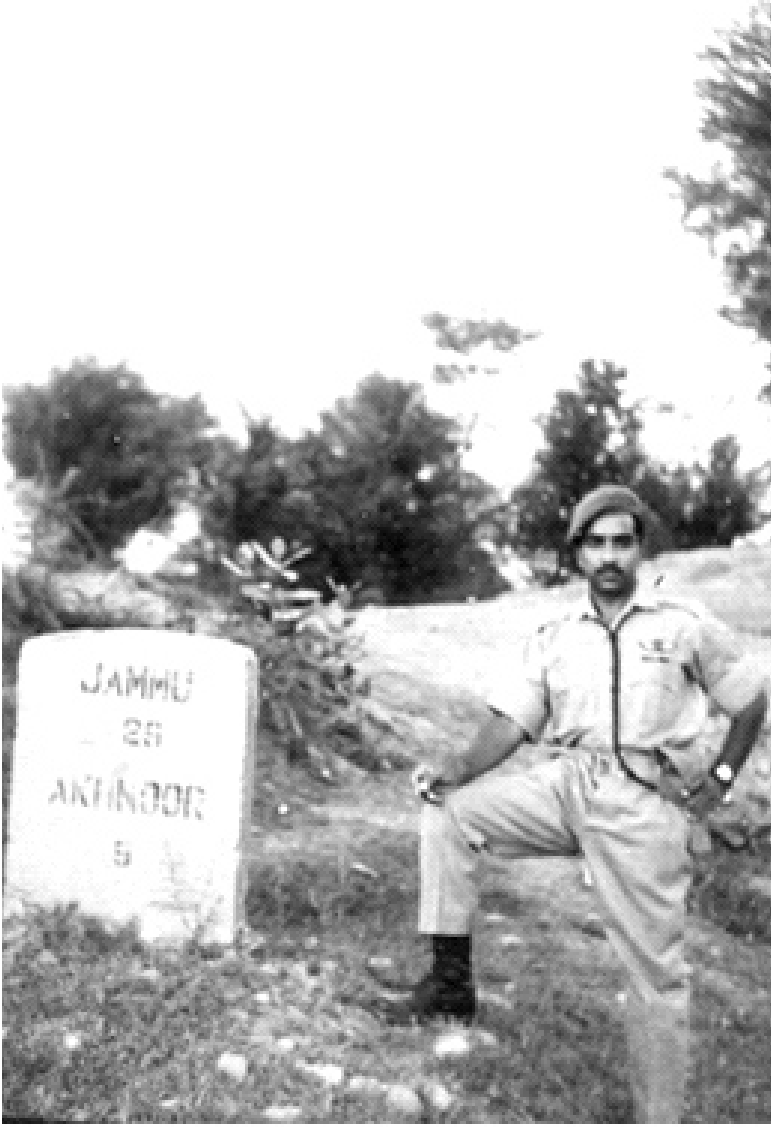
Our Instructor Lt. Gen. Malik Abdul Majeed left, along with some of our other colleagues, Islamabad Club.

Another view of the gathering, Islamabad Club.

In Conversation with Major General M. Imtiaz Ali, author is on the left. Rawalpindi club.

Some of the old Ravians of Class of 1943. We met recently,
author is on the right Lahore.

Lt Col N.K. Babar with the Company of 5th Light Sikh Infantry Battalion that he Captured.


JAMMU
25
AKHNOOR
5

Major Masud near the location of the forward strip. He is standing at Fatwal ridge, which was overlooking Akhnur and the area of the Bridge.

had found out that I was from Arain Baradari, to which he also belonged, and was keen to highlight that aspect. He also mentioned that perhaps we may be related to each other. I was rather surprised, as I knew of no connections. The formalities being over; I told Brigadier Sagheer that we should let the two together as they may have something confidential to discuss. We went over to the other corner of the drawing room. A little later General Zia remarked that they were not scheduled caste that we have left them alone. He wanted us to join in. We went over, and the conversation started. He was telling Nasir-Ullah Babar that had he not been retiring from the Army, he would have appointed him as Chief of the General Staff. Since he was not available, he asked him who the next best choice should be. The name of Major General Abdullah Khan Malik, of our course, was mentioned by Babar. To this General Zia said, "You know Sagheer was mentioning the same name to me last night." He had settled on that choice. The same evening the announcements were made in the media. Next day Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar took the oath of office as Governor. Khaqan Abbassy had arranged a wagon, and as a group, we went over to Peshawar to attend the Swearing in Ceremony.

Sometime after Naseerullah Babar had taken over as Governor NWFP, Mr Bhutto arrived in Peshawar and spent the night at the Governor's house. This gave Babar the opportunity to have an intimate one- on- one meeting with Mr Bhutto in which he briefed the Prime Minister of the situation in the Province and the Tribal territory. For dealings with the Tribal area, Mr Bhutto trusted General Babar's judgement and relied entirely on his advice and equally had given him a free hand. But when it came to discussing the situation in the settled areas of the Province, General Babar was very critical of the Chief Minister Nasrullah Khattak. He was giving Mr Bhutto all his shortcomings and was warning him that his Chief Minister will let him down. This irritated Mr Bhutto, and angrily he asked, "Why do you refer him as my Chief Minister, is he not your CM too?" To this Babar answered, "No."To elaborate, he explained that his authorities as Governor remain confined to the tribal territory and as far as the rest of the province is concerned it is the Chief Minister who is in charge and that he cannot interfere in his working. To this Mr Bhutto suggested that General Babar should join his political party and become a force in running the party in the province to become an indirect check on the CM. General Babar politely declined this offer by Mr Bhutto and told him that he had no interest in politics and would not like to get involved in this business. He also said that since he had brought him there as Governor, he would faithfully continue to discharge his duties and would not like to interfere in the Province's running. This defiant attitude of

General Babar upset Mr Bhutto, and he returned from his trip to Peshawar in a rather angry mood. The next day Mr Bhutto shared his annoyance at General Babar with Hafiz Pirzada, who was his trusted Minister. This prompted Mr Pirzada to visit Peshawar and meet with General Babar immediately. In the meeting, he explained the extent to which Mr Bhutto was upset with his attitude and behaviour. To this, General Babar had a blunt answer: he never came to this job as his choice, instead was inducted into it as preference of Mr Bhutto himself and if now he does not approve of him, he would be willing to leave the office immediately and live a retired life at his house in Peshawar. Mr Peerzada tried to calm down General Babar and returned from his trip to Peshawar. General Babar asked his wife to pack up his clothes as they may be called upon to leave on brief notice. When Mr Peerzada informed Mr Bhutto about his visit and his discussions with General Babar, he did not feel affronted and nor did he lose his temper or express any indignation. He decided to fly over to Peshawar the next day and meet with General Babar again. In the meeting, he expressed his full faith and trust in him as the Governor and told him he appreciated his openness and sincere advice and would like to continue working with him. He also gave his assurances that he would respect the decision of General Babar not to join politics and that he did not mind his refusal to join Pakistan People's Party. This brought in a new understanding between the two and left no acrimony or distrust.

One day, while playing golf with me, Colonel Blottie suggested to me that he would like me to meet a person who is visiting from the United States. He also told me confidentially that though the visit was being described as private, this person was visiting the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent as the personal representative of the President of America. The purpose is that he should make his independent assessment and send a report direct to the President. Since I thought that the visit had vital importance to Pakistan and may have far-reaching consequences in moulding the future American policies in the region, I told him he was most welcomed to bring him to my house. A few days later Colonel Blottie came to my house accompanied by the guest he had mentioned to me earlier. He introduced him to me as Lewis S.Perlstein. He was an industrialist and lived in Boston. He was in his late 70's and appeared to be a very dignified person. I was impressed when he candidly told me he was a Jew. He started the discussions by saying that he was on a private visit to the region and had been in India for about two months before coming to Pakistan. I had to tell him equally frankly that it does not matter to me if he was a Jew because I believe in judging a person by what he is and how sincere he is. This started the discussions in a very amicable atmosphere. He started by telling his experience of his two-month stay in India. I was keen to listen to his background and the purpose of his visit, so I did not interrupt him. He went on talking for a relatively long time to describe the impressions he gathered during his visit to India. The sum total of this all was that he told me, "Young man, there is a lot of goodwill and friendliness for you. The Indians very sincerely want to move forward in developing their bonds with Pakistan and having met a lot of people from all walks of life, I am saying it with a lot of confidence that there is a significant degree of expectation in their minds that the relationship between the two countries can be made friendly if we also equally respond." Having listened to him with patience for as long as he wanted to speak his mind out, I gave him in detail what we feel and what our view was. In brief, I told him, "Mr Perlstein you stayed in India for two months and have now come to Pakistan with a clear conviction that the Indians are having a lot of goodwill for Pakistan and are keen to develop friendly relations with us. While we have all the respect for your assessment, but from our perspective, we feel that the relationships can only improve if the Indians are willing to find a peaceful solution to the long outstanding problem of Kashmir. It is central to us. The 15 Million people of occupied Kashmir deserve to have the right to choose their own destiny. If 8 Million Jews living in Israel on a land which did not belong to them, but was usurped from the Palestinian's have the support of the entire Western World and the right to their claims on those lands, then how can it be denied for the suppressed people of Kashmir living in their own lands as free citizens? The same morality demands that there should be uniform standards. This is our acid test for the Indian sincerity in their desire to develop a closer relationship. If that is not forthcoming, then they are only doing lip service and are not sincere to the cause. This is not acceptable to us. You stayed in India for two months and have come with the vivid impression of their sincerity and their mind. I can only tell you that we have lived with them for over 700 Years. I can say it with all the conviction and authority that we know their mindset better than anyone else." To illustrate the point, I gave him two examples. The first was an old story we had heard from our childhood. It said that a Hindu and a Muslim were fighting with each other. The Hindu had floored the Muslim on to the ground and was beating the hell out of him and yet he was crying. Someone asked him how he could still cry when he is clearly bashing the Muslim. The answer was that he was worried as to what will happen to him when the Muslim gets up. He spontaneously burst out into laughter and said that this is the best example he had ever heard. The second example was of an actual account that General Gul Hassan had given me. He described that at the first meeting that he had with Mr Chou-en-lai, a fascinating discussion developed. He was accompanying Mr Bhutto, who was the Foreign Minister. While they were highlighting the threat that Pakistan had from India, they were emphasizing that they knew the Hindu mindset better than anyone else. He listened to them but moved on with the discussion and seemed to have not given much importance to their remark. After the 1962 event, they again were on a visit to China as part of the Pakistani delegation. When they met with Mr Chou-en-Lai, he started the meeting by reminding them of the remark that they had made about the Hindu mindset in their last meeting. He went on to say that when they had made that comment, he took it rather lightly. But now he fully understands the import of it in its real sense. He assured them that from now onwards he would listen to their views before dealing with India. He said that just as we knew the Hindu mindset better than anyone else, in the same vein, he knew the Russian mindset better than anyone else. He concluded on the note that if we consider Hindus as bastards, then I must categorise Russians as “Maha Bastards.” Mr Perlstein took these words of the Chinese leader rather seriously. It seemed that the euphoria of his visit to India was waning away.

Mr Perlstein stayed in Pakistan for one month. We had several meetings after that. Colonel Blottie also arranged his meetings with several others, including General Zia-ul-Haq, who was then the COAS. They would keep me briefed about the discussions they held. Finally, I got a call from him one day that he was leaving Pakistan and headed for Afghanistan. He also told me that while in transit, he would spend a day in Peshawar. I said that while he is in Peshawar, he must meet with my friend Major General (Retd) Babar, who was then the Governor of NWFP. This he did. Before that, I had briefed Babar about Perlstein and the purpose of his visit to Pakistan. In the meeting, Babar again very candidly put the case of Pakistan to him. Before leaving Peshawar, he rang me up and told me,”Mahmud, I had arrived in Pakistan with different ideas, but now I am leaving this place with an entirely different vision and outlook. I promise you that from now on I will put my best foot forward for Pakistan.”

Time went on. While Babar was in his element in handling his position as the Governor of NWFP in which FATA came directly under him. I had to leave for America. I represented Sikorsky Aircraft, which Colonel Blottie had arranged. They were having their Annual meeting of their agents the world over and so I was also called to attend. When I arrived in America, I called Mr.Perlstein to inform him I was in States as I had earlier promised him. He was very pleased that I had arrived in America and said that I must meet with him during my stay. After the conference of Sikorsky Aircraft was over, they arranged a meeting for me with General Haig, who had been the President of United Technologies, in which group Sikorsky was also a part. In Washington I arrived at his office, where he was now working as the Advisor to the United Technologies, and was ushered in. After the initial courtesies of the meeting had ended, he apologised to me as I had to wait for a little while as he was completing his Wealth Tax return. During that, he told me he has to provide all details of the Sikorsky Helicopters that he had facilitated in selling and had received the Commissions on those sales. He also told me that the tax department will deduct the required Tax on that and the rest of the amount would be his legitimate earnings. It took my attention, and I wondered how this Commission business was being abused in Pakistan!

After I had finished with all these meetings, I went to Trenton to stay with my brother who was based there. During that visit, I called Mr Perlstein and told him that I was now free and would be available for a meeting with him. He suggested that I should fly over to Boston and spend the day with him. Having agreed, I fixed my flight and told him accordingly. When I arrived at Boston Airport, he was there to receive me. He first drove me around Boston and showed me all the prominent places, where many of the Ivy League Universities were located. After that, he took me home, and we had a very pleasant conversation. He pointed out a book that was lying on his shelves and told me that this was the report that he had written on his arrival back to America after his tour. He also told me that the report had been sent to the President directly and that it was being followed by many of the policy makers, including the Pentagon. He could not show me the report as it was Confidential but emphasised that he had fully acted on the promise that he had made to me while departing Peshawar. I spent a pleasant day with him, and he dropped me at the Airport to catch my flight back to Trenton.

On return to Pakistan, I got busy in the affairs of International Aviation Services, which was doing an aerial dusting of Cotton Crop against the pest attack. The aerial spray which was covering an ecological area was more effective than the ground spray but was benefitting only the big landlords. This was meeting with resentment from the farmers with small landholdings. But anyhow, business was going on. I regularly remained in contact with all my close friends; Babar was the Governor, and Major General Abdullah Khan Malik was the Chief of the General Staff at GHQ.

Major General Ghulam Safdar Butt was heading FWO. Major General M. Riaz Khan was the Director General at the Inter Services Intelligence Directorate. We were regularly sharing our views of the current situation. There was nothing very exciting as things were normal and the country was going through a period of relative stability. Only some instances come to mind, which may be of some interest to the readers. General Babar was very active as Governor NWFP. He was regularly on visits to the Tribal Territory and was taking a lot of interest in the area's development. This was very essential, as the people of the area were very deprived. They had to be brought into the economic mainstream for their integration with Pakistan. A lot of networks of roads were under construction, electric power lines were being laid, and many schools and small dispensaries were being set up. He was regularly advising Mr Bhutto to make his scheduled visits to the tribal areas twice a year. He got the Prime Minister's permission to provide the electric supply to those areas free. He also had the inauguration of the Cadet College at Razmak, done by the Prime Minister. Back in his own office, he had created a separate cell under Lieutenant Colonel Ata-urRahman Kallue. This cell was doing all the coordination with the Afghan Leaders like Prof Rabbani, Gubadin HikmatYar, Ahmad Shah Masud, Dostum and many others. These were the leaders who had arrived from Afghanistan with a force of 2,000. General Babar had them collected and trained at Cherat and Nowshera while he was IGFC. They had cause to pursue. They wanted to get rid of the despotic rule of Sirdar Daud and had developed close links with Babar. The interesting thing was that they represented a very broad cross-section of the Afghan people; the Pakhtuns and the people of Northern Afghanistan were all there. I knew quite a few of them as I was with Babar on many a mission when he was receiving them on their arrival from Afghanistan. Also off and on when I visited General Babar while he was the Governor I would run into them.

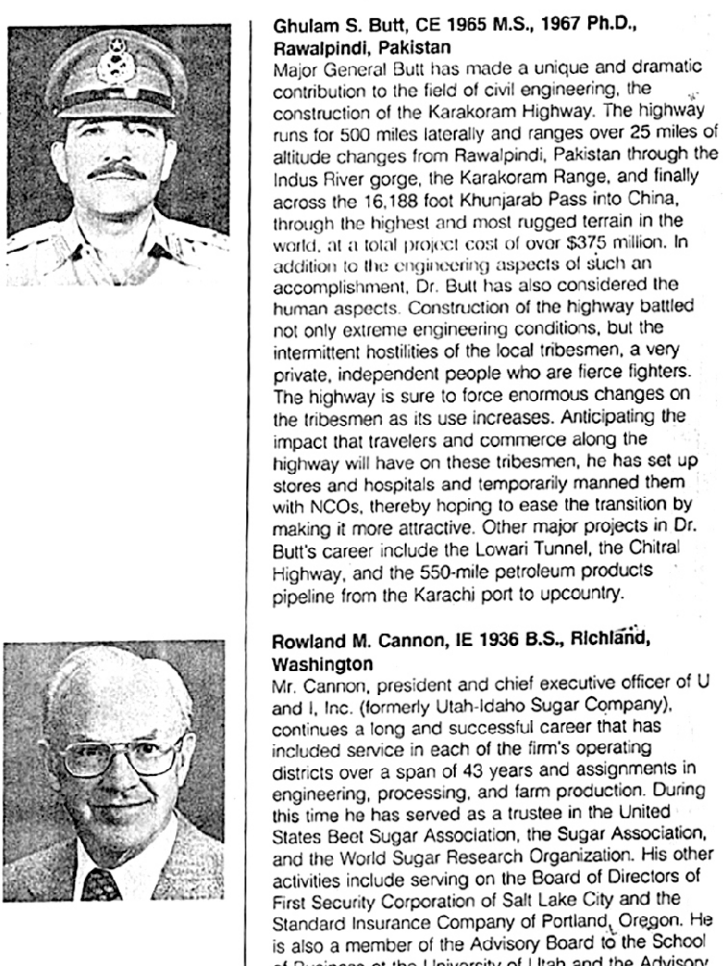
However, in Afghanistan, the political unrest had started. The exiled Afghan Groups, who Babar had collected, were now becoming very active in their areas. The first significant action they carried out was in the Paktia Province of Afghanistan. Sirdar Daud got the message, and he rushed to Islamabad to meet with Mr Bhutto. All the details I have already covered earlier.

On the lighter side, I would like to narrate an occasion to illustrate as to how close we were as a group. We all were from First PMA Long Course and had a lot of affinity with each other. When Major General Abdullah Malik became the Chief of General Staff, Major General

Safdar Butt called me to suggest that we should visit him in GHQ. When we arrived there, Abdullah was sitting on the chair where, many times before, his predecessors had summoned us on different occasions. We would enter the office with circumspect, as it had a certain awe about it. But this time we were doing so as if we owned the office. When we sat down in the chairs, Safdar Butt put his legs on the table and relaxed. He made the remark that it was his lifetime ambition that one day he should arrive in this office and feel so completely at home. In that mood he was about to light his cigar, when Abdullah said that do feel totally at home, but I beg you not to smoke in my office. He was very allergic to it, and yet the irony was that he died of lung cancer!

The offices of FWO were right across our office in Westridge-1 locality. So I would visit him very regularly. Sometimes he would just barge into our office and we always had a close relationship. One day while I was visiting him in his office, he was doing the planning of the Lowari Tunnel, the task that General Babar had got assigned to him through the Office of the Prime Minister. He was asking his staff to complete the project early, and hence he would like the work to start at both ends of the tunnel. In a lighter vein, I intervened that don’t end up with two tunnels. There was a spontaneous laughter. But that was all in good fun.

Sometimes later while I was in Germany visiting my brother who was living there, I got a call from Safdar Butt that he was in Switzerland and I should join him there. When I arrived there, he took me to the site of some new tunnels being excavated. While in those tunnels he was making special inquiries and particularly looking at the laser equipment, which would keep the alignment absolutely within precise limits. Laughingly, he said that this was in answer to my remark of two tunnels that I had earlier made at Rawalpindi. The work started at Lowari Tunnel and has now been completed successfully, thanks to the most Professional approach that Major General Safdar Butt showed. Incidentally, he had done his PhD from America in soil analysis and had used that knowledge in the work that he had been doing at the Karakorum Highway. This study that he had done together with an American Colleague had also been used for the first landing on the Moon. Some staff of his old faculty in the USA visited him while he was working at the KK Highway. This is what they wrote about him:-



**Ghulam S. Butt, CE 1965 M.S., 1967 Ph.D., Rawalpindi, Pakistan**
Major General Butt has made a unique and dramatic contribution to the field of civil engineering, the construction of the Karakoram Highway. The highway runs for 500 miles laterally and ranges over 25 miles of altitude changes from Rawalpindi, Pakistan through the Indus River gorge, the Karakoram Range, and finally across the 16,188 foot Khunjarab Pass into China, through the highest and most rugged terrain in the world, at a total project cost of over $375 million. In addition to the engineering aspects of such an accomplishment, Dr. Butt has also considered the human aspects. Construction of the highway battled not only extreme engineering conditions, but the intermittent hostilities of the local tribesmen, a very private, independent people who are fierce fighters. The highway is sure to force enormous changes on the tribesmen as its use increases. Anticipating the impact that travelers and commerce along the highway will have on these tribesmen, he has set up stores and hospitals and temporarily manned them with NCOs, thereby hoping to ease the transition by making it more attractive. Other major projects in Dr. Butt's career include the Lowari Tunnel, the Chitral Highway, and the 550-mile petroleum products pipeline from the Karachi port to upcountry.

**Rowland M. Cannon, IE 1936 B.S., Richland, Washington**
Mr. Cannon, president and chief executive officer of U and I, Inc. (formerly Utah-Idaho Sugar Company), continues a long and successful career that has included service in each of the firm's operating districts over a span of 43 years and assignments in engineering, processing, and farm production. During this time he has served as a trustee in the United States Beet Sugar Association, the Sugar Association, and the World Sugar Research Organization. His other activities include serving on the Board of Directors of First Security Corporation of Salt Lake City and the Standard Insurance Company of Portland, Oregon. He is also a member of the Advisory Board to the School of Business at the University of Utah and the Advisory Board to the School of Business at the University of Washington.

Life went on. We were busy in undertaking aerial crop dusting and were organising our Company. We were already representing Sikorsky Aircraft in Pakistan and then later on one of my visits to Germany; I was introduced to Krauss Maffei management, and they also agreed to have me as their representative in Pakistan. They were the manufacturers of the best Tank in the world, namely Leopard II. On the political scene, not much was happening. Mr Bhutto had an early election as he felt that he could come back in the assembly with a bigger majority. These were held, and turmoil erupted on the results because the opposition felt that rigging had taken place. Even Colonel Blottie remarked at the Golf Course that he believed that to be the case. I felt that this was too early to make this judgement since there was no evidence being cited, but he would still harp on that tune. Soon opposition got united, and demonstrations started on the streets. I met Brigadier Muzaffar Malik, the Chief Secretary of Punjab. He was also from our course. He told me categorically that Mr Bhutto gave no orders for rigging and he too gave no such instructions. Some rigging took place on a few limited seats, but this was all done at the local level was his observation. This has happened in all elections in the past, he told me. But the frenzy for re-elections was being whipped up. At this stage, Mr Bhutto met with a team of the opposition parties and negotiations went on for a few days.

## CHAPTER 12

## THE MARTIAL LAW OF GENERAL ZIA

It was on the morning of July 4, 1977, that I went to see Major General Imtiaz in the Prime Minister's Secretariat. When I met him, he was dozing off to sleep. On my inquiry, he told me he had not slept for the entire night as The Prime Minister was having meetings with the opposition leaders. He was happy that the negotiations were successful. The Prime Minister had agreed to the demands of the opposition for re-elections, and their team had gone back to have the approval of all their political party heads. To my surprise and that of many others, General Zia-ul- Haq staged the coup d'état on July 4, 1977 night. Mr Bhutto was taken into custody and flown to Murree. Major General N.K. Babar was also removed from his office as the Governor. He called me in the evening to say that he was announcing his decision to join Pakistan People's Party later that day. "Why are you being so stupid? Mr Bhutto had asked you earlier frequently to join his party, but you always refused. You maintained that you have no interest in Politics. Then why this rash changes in your decision?" I asked him. His reply was, "Those were different circumstances. Now that he is in trouble, it is my moral obligation that I stand with him." This he did so faithfully and full of all determination. Nothing could change his mind! He had a very close relationship with General Zia, but yet his decision was to stay with Mr Bhutto. About two days after that, Brigadier (Retd) M.Saleem Ullah from Army Aviation, and I went to Chaklala to meet with Lieutenant General Faiz Ali Chistie, who was the Corps Commander. Thumbing the table, he was saying with all the authority that he told Maulvi, referring to General Zia, that he should declare Martial Law. "He had no courage, and I held his hand to do so." Was what he was saying with all the emphasis at his Command? And now, in all innocence, he says that he just carried out the orders and that he was not responsible for declaring Martial Law.

Soon after they declared the Martial Law, I went to meet Major General Abdullah Malik at his house. We did this quite often, but this was a very special occasion, and all minds were speculating as to what was the background of that and as to what is in store in the future. He had been closely involved in all the events that took place before the imposing of the Martial Law. He told me that as the political situation deteriorated, regular meetings were held both with the Prime Minister and in GHQ. In the meetings with Mr Bhutto, he always accompanied General Zia. In those meetings, General Zia always kept giving him all the assurances that he was fully behind him. One day Mr Bhutto mentioned that he was a politician and can only look for a political option. He also said that Military option is not his choice, and that it can only be the prerogative of the Army. This alerted General Zia's mind and attention. On arrival back in GHQ, he called a meeting of the Corps Commanders. When the discussions started, General Zia gave a brief background of the situation that the country was in. Having said these few words, he asked all present to give their views. The first to address was Lieutenant General Chistie. He eloquently put forth his views that the military solution seemed to be the only way to handle this crisis. There were seven Corps Commanders, apart from Abdullah, present in the meeting. They were all parrot-like, repeating the views of what General Chistie had said. It struck Abdullah then that they had been already briefed by General Zia. After they had all finished, General Zia turned around and asked him for his views. He took a few moments to think and reflect on his next move. One option was that to echo the same views that were held by those who preceded him. The other option was to speak out his mind in all sincerity, and what he considered was in the best interest of the Country. In the span of those few seconds, he decided to speak his mind candidly and openly. It was the future of the country which was at stake, and he could not fret and worry about his own career. He spoke for nearly half an hour. He started by saying,"Gentlemen, haven't we seen the previous two Martial Laws and the ultimate fate they met. They left more problems in the wake of it than what they went about addressing. In my mind, Martial Law will hardly be the solution and that we should let the politicians handle their own differences and problems and find a political settlement to this political crisis." What he was saying was apparently on the looks of their faces, did not seem to impress them. But he went on and kept forcefully emphasizing that Martial Law is hardly the solution. The meeting ended with no final decision, and the consensus developed was that they would carefully watch the situation.

One day while Major General Abdullah Khan Malik was sitting in his office, when he got a call from the Prime Minister's Office to tell him that he was wanted there. He made a call to COAS but found out that he was not in his office. From this, he presumed that probably he is already in the Office of the Prime Minister and now he was being also summoned there. On reaching there, he found out that he was alone. He was immediately ushered into the Prime Minister's office. Mr Bhutto started by explaining that the political situation is continuing to deteriorate despite his best efforts. He was still looking for a political solution. Then he changed the subject and said that he was not happy with the performance of General Zia-ul- Haq as COAS and was thinking of replacing him. The hint was immediately taken by Major General Abdullah Malik, and he told the Prime Minister that he should not tamper with the Army as an institution. It is a vital organ, in fact, the key to safeguarding Pakistan's national interest. Mr Bhutto probably got the point and hence did not dilate on it anymore. After the meeting was over, Abdullah came back to GHQ and went straight to the office of COAS. General Zia had arrived. Major General Abdullah Malik walked into his office and gave him all the details of the event. General Zia was quite perturbed. He told Abdullah that he should not have gone to see the Prime Minister without getting his approval. He replied that he did call him, but since General Zia was not in the office, Abdullah presumed that he had already gone to the Prime Minister's office. General Zia told him to confirm such requests through the office of the COAS from now onwards. But he then himself retracted from that and told Abdullah that he will inform the Prime Minister about it himself on his next meeting with him.

Sometimes later, CGS was to make a presentation of the next year's training programme of the Army in a conference attended by all the Corps Commanders. After the briefing was over, General Zia just out of the blue asked Major General Abdullah Malik, "Malik Sahib what do you think of the Military Option now?" Abdullah was rather astonished by the question, and replied, "I am the CGS of the Army. All intelligence agencies come directly under me. Don't you think I know what all is happening." He elaborated, "I know you all met several times and had some other subsequent clandestine meetings. I also know what all you discussed there. It is in my knowledge that you have already decided to declare Martial Law. Since you have asked my answer to it, it is still an emphatic no!" This took them all by surprise. They must have been wondering why Major General Abdullah did not inform the Prime Minister about it! A clear mistrust between the Army hierarchy and its CGS had developed. Major General Abdullah Malik was acting to serve the interests of both the Army and the Country, and he was prepared to sacrifice his own career

It was on the night of the Coup that Abdullah was woken up by a call from General Zia at about 03:00 Hours in the morning, asking him to come over to GHQ. When he reached there, General Zia was in the operations room, and Lieutenant General Chistie was also beside him. As he entered the room, General Zia told him that he had declared the Martial Law and that Mr Bhutto had been deposed from his office. Abdullah replied that he had known about it, but since he was not asked to come, he abstained himself from coming to GHQ. After I had learned all the first hand accounts of this chain of events, I told Abdullah, "It is evident that General Zia has no faith in you. He does not want to trust you anymore. You have only one honourable option, and that is to resign." He agreed with me. The next day when he went to GHQ he very frankly mentioned to General Zia, that in the view of the current circumstances and the situation as it had developed, he feels strongly that he should tender his resignation. To this General Zia, typical to his style, keeping his right hand close to his heart said, "No, Malik Sahib you are my finest officer. I see you going to the top. Since you do not have enough experience of the Command of a Division, I am posting you to Quetta to take over 17 Division." When Abdullah told me about it, I remember saying, "I wonder how you can trust such a shady character. He responded that it was difficult for him not to give the General a chance to be tested. He took over the Command of his new formation. I had gone to Karachi and decided that on my way back to Rawalpindi I should stop over at Quetta to meet with Abdullah Malik. I spent the night at his place. I tried to emphasise to him again that he should not continue serving in the Army. To this, he replied that General Zia had again met him recently on his visit to Quetta and had assured him that nothing will come in the way of his further promotion. And so he believed him, and the matter rested at that. He was sent to Sukkur as the Martial Law Administrator of the area. Mr Bhutto's trial at Supreme Court was being concluded. I had attended all the four days of the trial that Mr Bhuttto attended and addressed the Supreme Court. I had also met Justice Nasim Hassan Shah in his chambers. I knew that he had a fear of the Martial Law authorities and that he would not be giving any judgment against their wishes or desires. To my mind, conviction of Mr Bhutto and his hanging appeared a distinct possibility. I was feeling very uncomfortable at the thought that General Zia had assigned Abdullah to Sukkur, to further demean him by giving him the ignoble task of taking care of Mr Bhutto's last rites at his native place Larkana. That was General Zia, in his real shape and character. So I flew over to Sukkur to meet with Abdullah again. I gave him the background of my meeting with Justice Nasim Hassan Shah. My advice to him again was that he should resign as I did not see any possibility of his promotion. The best is to leave the Army with honour and dignity. But he wasn't pressed on it and still had some hopes. With regards the arrangements for the funeral and burial of Mr Bhutto, he told me that Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Zahid Ali Akbar, had already been placed at Larkana, and if required he will be given the task to look after that.

Major General (Retd) Babar remained firm to the cause he had chosen for himself. He paid a hefty price for it, but it did not matter to him. This was typical of Naseerullah and the man he was. He was later arrested and sent to Haripur jail. I went to see him. He was in high spirits and had no regrets, remaining committed to the cause he had laid before himself. He was later sent to Peshawar Jail. I also went to Peshawar to see him. Lieutenant Colonel Pir Abid was from our course, and he was the superintendent of the jail. He gave me permission to see him, though government policy was that Babar was allowed no visitors. When I arrived at the jail, Babar was sitting with Abid in his office. He looked completely relaxed and told me that Abid insisted that he should stay with him in his house in the jail, but he had refused. Pir Abid insisted that he did not care, but I still decided against it. That was the spirit of our course, and I admired his kind gesture. Later, a close friend of ours, Colonel (Retd) M. Zafar Khan, who lived in London, had come on a visit to Pakistan and expressed his wish to see Babar at Peshawar jail. I called Lieutenant General Jehan Dad, again from our course, who was Corps Commander at Rawalpindi, the seat of power. I asked him that Zafar and I want to see Babar in Peshawar and requested him to get us the permission. Lieutenant General Fazle Haq was the Governor of NWFP, and earlier, he had given strict instructions not to allow anyone to meet General Babar in the jail. He also knew Babar from the days of Royal Indian Military College, and later PMA.

I was astonished when Jehan Dad called me the next day, only to tell me that the permission to meet Babar had been refused by Fazle Haq. I was livid. I said that he was the typical weathercock of the course. He would remain on the side of whosoever was in power, but yet he could not prevail upon his colleague at Peshawar to permit us to meet Babar. A few days later I got a call from Lieutenant Colonel Zafrullah, also from Army Aviation. He told me he had learned that we wanted to meet with General Babar. I answered in the affirmative. He advised me to come to his unit the next day and that he will arrange the meeting. I asked him how come! He said, “I am the President of the court, which is Court Martialling General Babar. I will put you there as the friends of the accused.” I was amazed at his boldness. I told him I would not let him do that as he would be in serious trouble. In all sincerity, he told me he could not live with himself if we do not attend his court. He. left us with no choice. I was happy that there were still some officers who were prepared to sacrifice their entire career for the respect of some people they held in honour and in high esteem. The next day Zafar and I drove to Peshawar, and on reaching his unit, he put us next to General Babar, in the room where he was already being arraigned in the Court. He told us he was appointing us as the friends of the accused and the proceedings started. The prosecution witness called was from some intelligence set up. He had been following General Babar to all the public meetings and was narrating all the speeches that Babar had been making. The President of the court then asked a question from the witness, “What was your impression of the contents of the speeches that General Babar had been making?” “I was much impressed and moved. He spoke in all sincerity and loyalty to the Country,” he replied earnestly. Pat came yet another question from the Court, “Did he say anything antistate?” “No”, came the reply. The Court adjourned for a short while, and when it resumed the hearings, the President of the Court announced his verdict. He declared General Babar not guilty of the Charges that he had been arraigned with, namely enticing people to rise against the state and acquitted him.

Subsequently, Lieutenant Colonel Zafrullah was Court Martialled twice. For the first time for smuggling an air conditioner from Bara Market on his motorcycle and the second time on yet another frivolous charge. Both the time he was honourably acquitted. His posting came as Instructor at Staff College Quetta, a prestigious assignment, but General Fazle Haq had it cancelled. In disgust, Lieutenant Colonel Zafrullah later addressed a letter to General Zia. The same letter he showed me on a visit that he would make whenever he was in Rawalpindi. The gist of this all was, “If you recall that after Mr Bhutto was deposed and you came to Murree to meet with him, I was instructed to be present there with you lest Mr Bhutto gets violent. I was privy to the very sensitive discussions held. I have faithfully kept the confidentiality of that. I have served the Army to the best of my capability. Tell me what is my crime that I am being haunted as if I am some criminal?” On receiving this letter, General Zia called him and told him he cannot keep him in the Army and is retiring him. To compensate him, he gave him the job of IG Prisons, Baluchistan. He was later even retired from there. Hadn’t this Army become the personal fiefdom of General Zia! Later, when Benazir came to power, General Babar had him posted to Dubai in the Embassy as Trade Counsellor.

After the coup of Zia, he abandoned this force of 2000 Afghans that General Babar had collected, trained and later they operated in Paktia Province, which brought Sirdar Daud to his knees. Since they had no one to go to, some of them, in particular, Gul Badin Hikmat Yar, would come to me regularly and complain about them having been totally forgotten and abandoned. They would also say that since General Babar is in jail, who else they could look up to except me. I tried to explain to them that

I was no longer in the Army and could hardly help them. But they would not buy it. I sent them to Lieutenant General Jamal Saeed Mian, who was the QMG at GHQ and was himself from FATA area of Parachinar. Even he did not own them up, nor did he talk to anybody else to look after them. It was a very frustrating experience for them. While playing golf with Colonel Blottie one day, I mentioned to him about this group, gave him their background and as to how they were being ignored now, causing fretting and frustration amongst them. I suggested to him that the American Embassy may like to take them over as they may be of some use to them later. But he said that he felt no need for them.

One fine morning I got a call from Mr Lewis Perlstein. He was calling from Islamabad Airport, where he had just arrived. He told me he had been invited as the guest of General Zia-ul-Haq, and would stay at the State Guest House. He wanted me to come over there as he wanted to meet with me. On reaching there, he told me he had a meeting later with General Zia and that he wanted to meet me before that so he could be briefed on the current situation prevailing in Pakistan. I gave him my views. In particular, I highlighted the oppressive rule of the military dictator. I also told him how roughly he had treated Major General (Retd) Babar, whom he once considered a friend, by hounding him from one jail to another. When it was the peak of summer, he sent him to Dera Ismail Khan Jail, the hottest place in Pakistan. He wasn't perturbed about the military rule, as it always suited the American interests in the region. They only had to deal with one individual, and that was COAS. But about the mistreatment of Major General (Retd) Babar, he was rather perturbed and upset. He told me he must meet with him and that I should arrange it. I said that it would not be appropriate; as he was a guest of General Zia and that it would upset him. The better approach would be to request General Zia to arrange a meeting. Later, when he met with General Zia, he brought up the idea of a meeting with Babar. Perlstein called me later to tell me that Zia had agreed to that. He told me he was going to Peshawar the next day and was staying at the Governor's house for the day. He suggested that I may tell Babar that he should be available in his house and Lieutenant General Fazle Haq, the Governor, would get in touch with him about the time for the meeting. This I did as Babar for a change was a freeman in those days. The next day Babar kept waiting for the call, but nobody contacted him. He called me in the evening to tell that he did not leave his house the whole day, but he received no message for the meeting. Later in the evening, Mr Perlstein on his return from Peshawar called me. He informed me he kept waiting for Major General (Retd) Babar the entire day, but despite many attempts by the Governor Fazle Haq, no contact with him could be made as he was not available at his house. I was rather amused by that and told him it is not true, as Babar remained in his house the whole day. This infuriated Mr Perstein, and he sounded very upset. He said, "I did not expect that Governor Fazli Haq would have gone as far as lying to me the complete day about Babar not being available in his house. He made no contact with Babar but kept telling me otherwise. He did not want me to meet him. I am rather astonished by this." He was very upset and went to say that he must meet with Major General (Retd) Babar, even if he had to drive to Peshawar again. I told him that there is no need for that as I can call Babar to Rawalpindi and he can meet him at my house. He was an old man, and he readily agreed to this suggestion of mine. I called Babar, and the next day he came to Rawalpindi, and Mr Perlstein had his meeting with him. They had a pleasant meeting and exchanged views on the developments in the region and the current political situation in the country.

During his brief stay in Pakistan, Mr Perlstein invited a small group of guests to a private informal dinner at the State Guest House. I was amongst those few chosen guests of his, including General Zia-ul-Haq, Mr Ghulam Ishaq, Lieutenant General (Later General) Rahim-ud-Din and Colonel Blottie. General Zia greeted me with a lot of enthusiasm, as usual. He inquired how our aerial spray company was doing. Since the Government could not decide as to the efficacy of aerial spraying of crops and was in doldrums in deciding, I told him, "We are waiting for your government to decide whether aerial spraying is good or bad." He laughed and replied, "I want to keep everyone guessing." This was typical of him. I retorted, "There is no need for this guessing game. You must decide one way or the other. If aerial spraying is not suited for Pakistan, then say so and give us permission to take the aircraft out of the country so that we can do business somewhere else." To his credit, we soon got the authorization to take the planes out of the country. Mr Perlstein had become a good spokesperson for Pakistan and had cultivated a few friends in the country too. He departed for America after his brief stay, but it was with a promise that he would remain in touch with the developments in Pakistan and try serving its interests to the best of his capabilities. He also pledged to come to Pakistan whenever he got an opportunity again.

Once we got the permission to take the aircraft out of the country, we got an aerial spraying contract in Sudan. It was our first International experience, and we were keen to build up the image of the company and country abroad. We planned as meticulously as we could and hoped for the best results. Nine aircraft of International Aviation Company, which included three of an associated group also, left for Khartoum from Islamabad Airport in May 1978. The flight up to Riyadh was smooth and free of any incidents, technical or otherwise. En route to Jeddah from Riyadh, the formation of the nine aircraft hit a severe dust storm. It made the aircraft desperately take their own corrective courses, individually, rather than as a collective diversion. The sudden and unpredictable dispersion of the aircraft in the flying space of Saudi Arabia sent an alarm and commotion in their Civil Aviation set up and control. Luckily, all landed safely at different destinations, and the fear and panic created subsided after all aircraft had been traced. However, a mild note of protest was sent to the Pakistan Embassyat Jeddah. Brigadier Ashraf, who was our defence attaché, called me to convey the reaction of the Saudi authorities. I had to tell him that it was all misplaced. We were given no warnings about the weather during the briefing at Riyadh, and the storm overtook the aircraft so suddenly and by surprise, that it left the pilots no other reaction but to all act on their own. Hence all the confusion! It was all beyond our control, and no blame should be cast on us. It satisfied him, and I hope the Saudi authorities must have realised as well that all this happened with no fault of our pilots. In fact, they handled the emergency calmly and with professional competence.

The next day all the aircraft flew into Jeddah from their locations, and the crisis so created ended on a cheerful note. The formation then took off from Jeddah for Khartoum. After a refuelling at Port Said, they all arrived together at Khartoum Airport. The sight was impressive to see. The authorities in Sudan were all full of praise. When I arrived in Khartoum and met the officials who were responsible for plant protection in the Gezira Scheme in Sudan, they told me they had never seen this sight. It was their commendable surmise that nine aircraft left Islamabad and arrived all together in Khartoum. They further told me that many companies, all from Europe, come every year for sprays and that they have never seen the sight of all their aircraft flying in together. They invariably have some of their aircraft delayed and left behind at different locations, because of some technical problems and only to join in later. All these compliments were a good start.

We did aerial spray operations for three years in Sudan. Our effort was again well appreciated by all. In 1979, Air Commodore (Retd) Mitty Masud, a hero in the 1965 war, also joined us and was given the position of the Chief Pilot. He organised the entire operation very meticulously. The authorities in Sudan rated our work to be best compared to all the other companies operating there. It was a great compliment. We kept the flag of the company and the country high.

During one of my visits to Khartoum, I ran into Lieutenant General (Retd) Habib Ullah Khan and his son Colonel Ali Kuli Khan, in the lobby of Khartoun Hilton Hotel, where I was staying, and they had also checked in. It was a pleasant surprise, as one did not run into many Pakistanis in the hotel. I held them both in high regards. I knew quite a few other Pakistani families living in Khartoum but did not see many Pakistanis in the hotel. We had a pleasant exchange of views. As I was planning to fly from Khartoum to London, Colonel Ali Kuli Khan firmly asked me to stop over at Cairo on my way and stay with him for a few days. I did so but had to opt for staying with Mr Sadiq Ali, who was an old friend and now head of the BCCI Bank in the region. He had been insisting that I must visit him in Cairo. He had made all the arrangements for my reception, stay and transport. Colonel Ali Kuli invited me to his house for lunch. During that, he told me he had never asked for any financial help from his father and that he had always lived in his own pay. But life in Cairo was very expensive, and he was finding living beyond his means. He told me he had written a letter to his father in which he requested him, "You know that I have never asked you for your financial help. But Cairo is a very expensive place, and the education of the children demands prohibitive fees. I can only afford to send my kids to regular schools. If you want your grandchildren to be well educated, then provide me with some funds." His simplicity and truthfulness touched me! I had not realised that he had never taken any help from his father. It spoke of the man that he was. I had already held him in high regards, but he rose in my esteem all the more.

The Government of Sudan had a lot of problems with the foreign exchange payments. One had to wait for over a year to receive the payments of the dues. This was becoming a significant impediment in our work, so we sold the aircraft to a local Sudanese company and wound up the operations in Sudan.

As promised, Mr Perlstein came to Pakistan on his third visit. He had his rounds of meetings to make his own assessment of the situation and, like always, gave his assurances that he will keep Pakistan's interests foremost in his mind. While on the return flight to America, on board a PIA Flight, he had a massive heart attack. The aircraft made a forced landing at Athens Airport, and he was rushed to the hospital, but he did not survive and breathed his last breath. He was a very humane, genuine and a good person and in him, Pakistan lost an excellent friend.

The trial of Mr Bhutto was finally coming to its end. I have already recounted my attending the trial for all four days and the meeting I had with Justice Nasim Hassan Shah in his chambers. Another aspect of the trial which needs to be reflected is how utterly subservient this apex court had become to the Chief Martial Law Authority. General Zia-ul- Haq had placed a gadget under the table right in front of the Chief Justice. The Chief Martial Law Administrator would light the bulb even when the court was in the session, to summon the Chief Justice for any advice or instructions that he wanted to give. The Chief Justice would obediently adjourn the court and attend the telephone call from CMLA. This was how low a level the Supreme Court had been reduced to! What justice they could deliver?

Finally, the verdict came. The Supreme Court gave its finding of guilty with a divided judgment of 4 to 3 margin and awarded Mr Bhutto death sentence. That the three judges still gave their opinion of not guilty was rather remarkable. They showed their strength of character and some paid the price for that. It was the view of Justice Nasim Hassan Shah that tilted the balance for conviction. And that was not his honest opinion! It was forced on him. All the four Punjabi Judges ganged up to give that infamous judgment.

After all the legal formalities had been over, General Zia-ul-Haq went through the execution of Mr Bhutto, despite all the pressure from different quarters. It reminded me of the keen interest that Colonel Blottie was taking regarding charges of the murder against Mr Bhutto even before his trial. It also brought back the memories of the threat that Dr Kissinger had given to Mr Bhutto in his meeting with him at Lahore. General Zia-ulHaq had a CIA connect. His entire story of how he was helped by different key individuals for elevation to the position of COAS, has that murkier background! Equally, General Zia-ul-Haq had now personal stakes in the hanging of Mr Bhutto. It was a case for his own survival. It was thus a perfect match of the common cause and interest of those who wanted to eliminate him.

The arrival of the body of Mr Bhutto at Sukkur, his burial under strict army security measures and even his face not been shown to his own near relations, is a sordid chapter of our history of which General Zia was the author. It need not be elaborated as all the details are well known. But what I would like to reflect is that General Zia had specially got Major General Abdullah Malik placed at Sukkur to oversee all these arrangements. It was a part of his cunning mindset that he wanted to teach Abdullah Malik his lessons. He suspected him of having links with

Mr Bhutto and for that reason he had removed him from the position of Chief of the General Staff and posted him to Quetta. This is what I was apprehending, and that was the prime factor that I was all along asking Major General Abdullah Malik to resign. But Abdullah had a clear conscience. Even when he met Mr Bhutto alone and where it was suggested that the Prime Minister wanted to remove General Zia-ul-Haq from the position of COAS, he stayed his hands by telling him not to tamper with the army as an institution. General Zia felt no gratefulness to him. After he had made him oversee all the final rights of Mr Bhutto's burial, he sent his posting order as Director General Defense Procurement at the Ministry of Defense. All the promises of seeing him go to the top were all hogwash. When Abdullah arrived in Rawalpindi to take over his new assignment, he met me to review the situation. I told him that the message is clear. He has no future left in his professional career in the army, was my advice and opinion.

"General Zia has given an obvious choice to you. Make money and relax," was my reading on it. In conclusion, I told him that it is up to you to either accept this proposition or reject it. He agreed with me. Soon after he took over his new assignment, he called General Zia and asked him for an appointment. He was very polite to him, saying that he would do that soon. A few days later the President and the Army Chief called Major General Abdullah Malik and asked him to name a country where he would like to go as Ambassador. This time the answer was very clear and forthright. "I refuse to represent you and your Government in any capacity," was what he told him. He was retired. And that was the end of the career of one of the most promising and professional soldier.

An old school day's friend Sheikh Riaz Ahmad, who was now running his own chartered accountancy firm in Karachi, called me to suggest that we should invest in a Solvent Extraction Industry, which was up for sale by the bank. I consulted my close friends Abdullah Malik, Safdar Butt and Muhammed Zafar Khan. We all agreed to chip in Rupees Five Lacs each and borrowed the rest of the amount from the bank. Abdullah raised his share by disposing of a plot he had received on his retirement from the army, and that incidentally was all the property that he had owned besides a plot he had earlier purchased at Islamabad. Once we had made all the arrangements, a date was fixed for us to be at Kabirwala, where Grace Industries was located, and where all the transfer of the documents in the land record was to be made. The Assistant Commissioner was the head of the Administration of the area. We needed to have some prior contacts with him so that all the paperwork could be complete in one day; the date fixed by the bank. Abdullah Malik and I left for Multan by air, and while in transit at Lahore, Lieutenant General (Later General) M. Rahim-ud-din, who was Corps Commander at Multan, also boarded the plane. He met us very enthusiastically and asked us the purpose of the visit to Multan. Abdullah told him we have some private work at Kabirwala. These were the days of Martial Law and so thinking that we may need some help, he asked us he will arrange all the help that may be necessary. Abdullah politely declined and told him we need no help, and everything is already fixed. When we landed at Multan Airport, Major General (Later Lieutenant General) Raja Saroop, who was GOC 1 Armoured Division, was there to receive his Corps Commander. Seeing us, he came over and embraced Abdullah and me. He was happy to see us and said that he will make everything available for our visit to Multan. He said that transport is available and he would have an officer detailed to accompany us wherever we wanted to go. He also inquired the purpose of our visit and said that any help that we need will be provided. We thanked him for all this gracious gesture but told him politely that we need no help and that everything is arranged. We had decided not to visit the Assistant Commissioner at Kabirwala with any high profile introduction, but to approach him simply as ordinary citizens seeking his help.

We had arranged for a car and drove straight to Kabirwala. When we met the Assistant Commissioner, we very politely told him the purpose of the visit and the need to complete all the formalities the next day as the team of the bank was only available for the day and had to return to Karachi in the evening. We needed to do all the mutations regarding the change of ownership of the land from the bank in the name of the company Effef Industries Limited. This name we had chosen as the five friends had gathered and decided to set up this industrial venture. The assistant commissioner listened to us very patiently and then gave a close look to Abdullah. After a brief pause, he said that he had seen him somewhere before. Taxing his mind a little, he asked if he used to come to the shop of Aziz Tailor in Rawalpindi. Abdullah replied in the affirmative. He immediately recognised him and asked him, “Aren’t you General Abdullah Malik, who was the Chief of General Staff at GHQ?” Abdullah confirmed that. The assistant commissioner asked him why he did not introduce himself. Abdullah answered that he purposely tried to avoid that reference as he did not want to impose himself. This created a superb impression, and he said all the staff would be made available to complete all the formalities as required. To continue the discussion, he asked Abdullah where he belonged to. His reply was that he hailed from Rawalpindi. Abdullah, in return and in all politeness, asked him where he belonged to. The answer was Dera Ismail Khan. Abdullah told him that his ancestors also came from the same area, and this again touched a very sympathetic chord with him. Anyhow, the next day the purpose was achieved, and we were happy that we accomplished all that without throwing our weight around. But as we were coming out of the office of the assistant commissioner, I told Abdullah that I was rather astonished to learn that his ancestors came from Dera Ismail Khan. This was news for me. Laughingly, he said that he told so because he wanted to be equally cordial with the assistant commissioner. It was all done in a lighthearted vein.

The rule of General Zia-ul-Haq from 1977 to 1988 secured his position as the Army Chief and the President of Pakistan. His primary task and that of some of his benefactors was to eliminate Bhutto. He had no vision beyond that! He was ruthless and had no principles. But after Bhutto was hanged, he was cunningly devoting himself to strengthen his hold over the country and all the institutions. The Amir of Jamaat-i-Islami Mian Tufail had become his close counsel and advisor. He too was an Arain and so they had another link for their affinity

Just to illustrate the point, I may give the example of the choice of new Air Force Chief after Air Chief Marshal Zulfikar was to retire on completion of his tenure. Air Vice Marshal Mian Sadruddin was very professional and also quite senior. But he was being dubbed as a Qadiani, and I knew that it was being held against him. So I went to meet with Major General Muhammad Riaz Khan, who was the Director General ISI, to clear this position with him. I told him he is being labelled as Qadiani and that I knew him well and can state with full responsibility that this is not true. I further told him that, leave alone being a Qadiani, he has no strong faith even as a simple Muslim. He is only a Muslim by name. I also emphasised that he was the most professional of the choices available and would be a good incumbent as Chief of Air Staff. Major General Riaz promised me he will carry out his investigation. A few days later he called me over to his house. He told me I was right and that he had no strong faith and so he is recommending his name as the next Air Force Chief. A few days later I was surprised to read in the papers that Air Chief Marshal Shamim Ahmed had been nominated as new Chief of PAF. I was very upset and went over to see Riaz. When I questioned him about how this happened, he told me not to blame him. He had cleared his name, but it was Mian Tufail who prevailed upon General Zia not to approve the name of Air Marshal Sadruddin. Typical of General Zia! He would not trust his own ISI Chief but would rather listen to the head of

Jamaat-i-Islami!

Enough has been written about the motives, the plans, and how ruthlessly General Zia-ul-Haq would take over and run this country. It was a typical game of the CIA. But unfortunately, they had penetrations at such top levels of the Armed Forces was a major factor to reckon with! We need not devolve in any more details of that. But what I may try to describe is how Mian Nawaz Sharif was picked and built up to counterbalance the popularity of the ousted Prime Minister Bhutto. It was Lieutenant General (Retd) Jilani, who on taking over as Governor Punjab, first picked him as Finance Minister of his cabinet and then later built him up as the future leader that the Army and the Intelligence Agencies would support without going into his calibre and his mental capacity for this key role, I would just give a brief background how he was made to build up his financial empire for that task.

We had read that the original Ithefaq Foundry, which was nationalised by Bhutto, had been privatised and handed over back to the family. It did not occur then, as to why only this particular industry was handed back and that if the military government had made a policy to denationalise all the assets taken over by the previous Government or that it was purely an exception. I was soon to find that out! My father-in-law brought his first cousin Mr C.M.Latif to meet me and to see if I could possibly help him. He was the owner of Batala Engineering Company (commonly known as BECO), and the same had also been nationalised by Bhutto regime. He wanted me to request Lieutenant General Saeed Qadir to privatise the same as they had done in the case of Ithefaq Foundry. I promised to help. The next day I went to see Lieutenant General Saeed Qadir and placed the request before him. He told me that BECO had piled up losses worth Rs. Forty Crores and that C.M. Latif should accept those. He also said that that BECO had a workforce of 2,000 workers which will also be retained by the company as he will not retrench any employee. If the management would agree to these conditions, he will be willing to privatise the company. In the evening I called up Mr C.M. Latif and told him of my earlier discussions at GHQ. He had a big laugh and said, “Brigadier Sahib, Saeed Qadir has made a big fool out of you.” I was very upset at that and asked him to explain his point. He asked me if I knew the terms and conditions at which Ithefaq Foundry had been de-nationalized. I told him no. His answer was, “I will tell you.” While elaborating on that, he said, “They also had losses of Rupees Forty Crores and a workforce of 2,000 workers. And in their case, the government has written off the total losses and has retrenched the entire workforce and has given back the company free of any encumbrances. To crown it, they have been provided with a grant of Rupees Forty Crores." I was completely taken aback by those clarifications. In a rage I went back to the office of Lieutenant General Saeed Qadir the very next day. I strongly protested at the answer he had given to me on the privatising of BECO the previous day. I was clamouring about these different policies and as to why he does not have one uniform standard approach. His reply was, "Why are you fighting with me? Why don't you tell C.M.Latif to send his son-in-law, Ambassador Waheed who is the first cousin of both General Zia and his wife, and tell him to give me the instructions to offer the same terms and conditions as I have given to Ithefaq Foundries? Without that how do you expect me to allow these terms and conditions to BECO, on my own?" It explained everything. A special favour had been done to the Sharif family for a special cause and purpose! This particular concession, which is plain and simple graft, was further exploited by them, using their positions as Chief Minister Punjab and even as Prime Minister. There were no end and limits to their greed, and it is in knowledge of all, how business was secured for their foundries defying all rules. Now they are claiming it is through their legitimate investment and work abroad that they have amassed this wealth. Who can ever believe that? This was the method of Martial Law Authorities to prop up and strengthen the opposition against Bhutto and his party.

As described earlier, these 2,000 Afghan volunteers that Major General Babar had gathered, trained and looked after personally, were left abandoned by the military regime after the overthrow of the Bhutto Government. They were drifting aimlessly, felt betrayed, and their frustrations kept building up. Babar was in jail most of the period, and out of compulsion, they would visit me regularly to ask for help. And I was in no position to redeem their predicament. The day the Russians moved in Afghanistan, I had a visit from Colonel Blottie from the United States Embassy, Islamabad. He was accompanied by another gentleman from the Embassy, and he was introduced as Mr John Reagan. They started the discussion straight with the question of where were Gul Badin HikmatYar and his other associates that I had been mentioning to Colonel Blottie. They expressed their urgent need to meet with them. I had to tell them they were not here in Rawalpindi and were at Peshawar. They said that they needed to meet with them urgently. It was agreed that I will try to arrange this meeting for the next day. It was done, and about six of them arrived at my house, and so did Colonel Blottie and John Reagan. At this stage, there was no clash of interests between the United States and Pakistan, and in fact, there was a mutuality of interest. The

Russians had arrived next door in Afghanistan and would now pose a direct threat to Pakistan. It was our mutual interest to check this threat. I had been foreseeing this possibility, and it was for that reason that I had advised Colonel Blottie frequently to have a meeting with them. Both sides met each other very enthusiastically. It was John Ragan who said that he would take them over immediately with him to the Embassy for further discussions. He also told me I need not be concerned about them anymore and that they will look after them from now onwards. He also told me he will keep briefing me on and off about further developments. Since then he became a regular visitor to my house. I soon learned that he was a key CIA representative at the Embassy.

When the American Embassy picked up these people and worked with them closely, the Zia regime also became active and became a part of the overall activity. But it was the CIA which was in full charge of all the planning, training and the operational plans of these groups. They were further strengthened and reinforced by volunteers coming from the Madrassah's spread all over the country. The CIA had completely taken over the ISI Headquarters at Islamabad and had it manned by the largest staff they had anywhere abroad. The ISI was just a conduit to provide the weapons and the training of these groups, while the overall direction and control was coming from the CIA team. Not all the details, but a gist of this was being conveyed to me by John Reagan. Now, of course, everyone claims that they defeated the mighty Russian army all by themselves, but they only had only a minor role to play, it was primarily the CIA which provided all the weapons and controlled, planned and coordinated all their activities and actions. I was being regularly briefed and had a first hand account of all these developments.

On learning about my planned visit to America in connection with the meeting with the Sikorsky Aircraft at Stratford, John Ragan suggested that I meet some people that he would like me to during my stay. I agreed to do that and gave him the telephone number of my brother at Trenton, with whom I was planning to stay. A few days after my arrival in the USA, I got a call giving reference of John Ragan, and a meeting was arranged at a hotel in New York. When we met, the two gentlemen who came for the meeting introduced themselves very frankly as being from CIA. The discussions started on a very co-cordial note. They told me they have a file on every prominent and key personnel both in the Armed Forces, the Civilians and all others who mattered. The next they told me they have a file on Major General (Retd) Naseerullah Khan Babar, who they said they knew was my friend. Though I was rather surprised, I still felt that they were compiling all the records as a routine, but obviously with some purpose in mind. I just thanked them for informing me. They said that they have studied the file of General Babar and that they have noted that he has all the strong points but that no weaknesses. This alerted me a bit. What shocked me was their next question, "Can you brief us on some of his shortcomings?"

I lost my cool and flared up. I told them, "I am surprised that you call him a friend of mine and then also expect me to enlighten you on some of his weaknesses. Since you have asked me that question, let me tell you he has none." With these remarks, I ended that meeting and walked away from the lobby of the hotel. I was rather amazed at the method and the tone of the working of CIA.

It was only a few days later that I received a call from John Reagan from Washington DC. He told me he had arrived in Washington for some official work and would like to meet me during his stay. We agreed to meet at Trenton at my brother's house. When he arrived, he suggested that we go over to the shopping mall and have a brief chat. He started off by apologizing for the arrogant and somewhat crude behaviour of the two CIA personnel that I had met just the other day. He told me that the purpose of the meeting was to enlist my support to help the Afghan Mujahedeen that I had introduced to them when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Elaborating, he said that they would need supplies of weapons and many other requirements and that I should act as the conduit between them and the United States Government. I very politely refused that offer and told him I had no interest in that kind of role and that I had no personal motivation when I introduced those elements to them. In my mind, I thought it was in the larger mutual interests of America and Pakistan, and hence there is no need for such an offer. But he still tried to persuade me to agree to his proposal. While again declining the proposition, I sat in the comfort of the reclining chair placed in the store and just made the remark that it was very comfortable. The meeting thus ended at an affable note. A few days later, when I arrived back at my house, I saw that chair lying in the family lounge. I was very surprised and asked my wife who had sent that chair. She told me that someone came from the American Embassy and left it here. I immediately called John Reagan and told him he need not have done that. I told him to kindly take it back. He replied that he would not do that and that I should accept this as a small token of his appreciation for all my honest intentions to work for a common cause and effort. He left me with no choice and we remained good friends ever since until he died. We met a few times after that and exchanged views on matters affecting Pakistan and the region, in particular the formulation of American policies in that respect. He respected my views, and hopefully they were helping the cause of Pakistan. He was later posted to China.

I was representing the three top companies in the world in the armament manufacturing field. They were Sikorsky Aircraft of United Technology Group of the USA, Krauss-Maffei of Germany and Blohm +Voss Shipyard of Thyssen Group, also of Germany. So I was taking a close interest in the purchase of weapons system by the Armed Forces of Pakistan. All the international companies were running their sales efforts through their nominated agents. To promote the work, these agents were getting fixed percentage of their sales as their commissions, and the same was incorporated in the agreements. These agents had to declare this, and they had to pay the applicable tax as per the policy of the country concerned. It is a universal practice.

In this context, I am reminded of a trip I made to the USA in connection with my work with Sikorsky Aircraft. As explained earlier, during this visit I had a meeting fixed with General Haig in his office at Washington DC. It was in connection with his forthcoming visit to Pakistan to promote the sale of Sikorsky helicopters, the famous Black Hawk. General Haig had been the President of United Technologies Corporate but was now acting as their advisor for the world over. I have already covered the essential details of this meeting. I now started thinking who follows that practice in Pakistan. No one ever discloses the commissions received in the sale or purchase of the deals being so completed. To make matters worse, the Armed Forces were trying to eliminate the agents in their contracts and deals. I was advising the higher authorities against this as this would bring in direct contacts between the corporate world and the serving officers and thus encourage corruptions in the ranks and files of the Armed Forces, even it going up to the senior ranks. Air Chief Marshal Agha Zulfikar Ali Khan was the one most seriously trying to implement this policy in the Air Force. He was a very close friend of mine, and I tried to strongly advise him against this. But he was very firm in his views. After he had retired, he told me he had since learnt that some officers had taken direct commissions in different deals. He agreed with me then that I was right in suggesting that the agents not be forbidden to be part of the deals. But the disease had caught on, and we now have accounts of many officers, and some very senior names too, who have been involved in making money in these defence deals. This practice is equally prevalent in all civil contracts and major projects. This menace has to be practically and pragmatically controlled and ultimately eliminated. It is one of the biggest sources of corruption in the country.

I had mentioned about my meeting with General Haig and his forthcoming visit to Pakistan. He arrived in Pakistan. In his meetings with General Zia-ul-Haq, he completed the arrangements for the sale of stateof-the art and most advanced helicopters, the Sikorsky's Black Hawk. The Chief of the General Staff, Major General Mian Afzaal, called me to say that the army had completed the deal with General Haig and since he had mentioned my name as the representative of Sikorsky Aircraft in Pakistan, he would call me soon to discuss the details. The opportunity never arose as a few days later he died, along with General Zia in that C-130 crash. The new incumbents had their own ideas, interests and priorities and I thought it prudent not to pursue the matter with them as it would be a waste of time. I also advised General Haig and Sikorsky Aircraft not to press for this for the time being, as Bell Helicopters had close links and Associations with these new decision makers. In fact, these interests work as mafias.

All the defence equipment and even the civilian projects and products have a built in commission in the price factors, and this needs to be regulated so that this is not misused and exploited by the higher authorities both in defence and the civilian hierarchy. These have become messy and murky and are one of the biggest sources of corruption in the country. It becomes so when the getting of commission becomes the criteria for the purchase rather than the quality and effectiveness of the product. There are many tainted names! In the illustration, I may cite a case in which I was directly involved and have personal information of how deliberately wrong decisions are foisted just in the efforts of filling their pockets. I learned that Pakistan Navy had a requirement of Frigates. And since I represented Blohm+Voss shipyard in Germany, which was producing the most modern frigate of the time, MEKO 360, I followed this project. Incidentally, this shipyard had earlier set up the Karachi Shipyard. Since I did not have any close contacts in the Navy, I sought a direct appointment with the Naval Chief Admiral Karamat Niazi. He met me very cordially and found time to explain to me the Navy's requirement. He said that Pakistan Navy was interested in the acquisition of three frigates, the broad specifications of which he would provide. Out of the three, one frigate was to be built in the country's shipyard, and the other two to be built at The Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works. But he mentioned that the major hurdle was that Pakistan had no funds and that loan would be required. I provided this broad information to my principals, and they examined the proposal they could make. When they got some sign of the possibility of the German Government loan, their team headed by Dr Rokham, the Managing Director came over to Pakistan and made a very detailed presentation on the technical specifications and the armament, sensors and other surveillance components of the ship. It was a revolutionary design; a modular ship where all the armament and the other main equipment would be in modules and these could be replaced and modernised whenever it was needed. It was an entirely new concept. The weapon systems and other sensors and surveillance equipment were fast improving, and older systems needed replacements periodically. The ship had to be broken up, and it needed a lot of time to accomplish the task. In modular form, these replacements had been made easy to achieve. Since it was a new design, a lot of questions were raised, like in which Navies has this concept been used and tested by? It was explained that in three Navies of the world, these ships have been acquired and tested and that the Turkish Navy have acquired the first Frigate from Germany and it is building additional two at their own shipyard, directly interested Pakistan. This satisfied the Naval Brass on all technical and other considerations, and the Turkish experience was equally useful as it was according to the plans of the Pakistan Navy. The MEKO 360 Frigates were acceptable by Pakistan Navy as they came up to their specifications set. The only hitch was that there was no confirmed availability of the German loan of $1.3 Billion, the total project cost. Finally, the German Government gave its approval of the loan amount required, and the project became active. At this stage, Admiral Niazi retired as the Naval Chief, and Admiral T.K. Khan took over as the new incumbent of the office. He too was a firm supporter of the German Frigate and had expressed his views at some of the meetings held at Naval Headquarters earlier.

At this stage, the British came up with an offer of their own Type 21 Frigate, which was built by their shipyard, Vosper Thorneycroft. The Royal Navy carried a lot of influence with our Navy, as they had old associations and close links with each other. Suddenly, this choice emerged as a firm favourite. I was very much surprised at this development as these frigates were in use in the British Navy and had failed badly in the Falkland war. Whenever the ship was hit, and fire would erupt, the aluminum superstructure would melt under the intense heat, and the ship would sink. I gave the naval authorities many extracts of the reports of British Naval inquiries and their press clippings on this serious defect. They seem to be also aware of this, but felt that this flaw can be removed and overcome. How, they could not explain and I could not imagine! Equally surprised was Dr Rokham, who was considered being an authority on Shipbuilding.

In these rumblings, I learned that Pakistan Navy had finally given the approval for the acquisition of three Type 21 Frigates. I felt very strongly against this. If the Navy was now not keen to opt for MEKO 360; was not my concern. But to go for an obsolescent Frigate, which had proven defects, would be the greatest disservice to the Navy and the Country! This was a big concern to me and to the many patriotic officers in the navy. I got many messages from some of those concerned to stop this deal. I knew that a big mafia was at work at the highest of levels, and I was still determined to do my best to stop this deal. It was in this background that Admiral T.K.Khan invited me to his house. He told me he felt sorry for me, but for some reasons and considerations which were highly confidential and could not be revealed, Pakistan Navy has opted for the Type 21 frigates against the choice of MEKO 360. I told him he did not have to feel sorry for me but to keep Pakistan's national interest uppermost in mind. He kept quiet, but the message was quite clear that the Pakistan Navy had made its choice.

I was still determined to stop this deal and kept making all the efforts that I could. I arranged a meeting between the high-powered team of Blohm+Voss, led by their Chairman and Dr Rokham, with General Ziaul-Haq. He was, as usual, very pleased to see me and extended all the courtesies to the team at his house where he had invited us to come. Dr Rokham was explaining to him how this project had been launched so successfully in Turkey, and how this innovative and modern concept of building the frigates was meeting the approval with the modern Navies. General Zia listened to it very attentively and even said that on his visit to Turkey he had been shown this Naval Shipyard from the air, which Dr Rokham had referred to in his briefing. But it was typical of him. He said that they were still evaluating and that he would keep these points in view. I knew that all the decisions had been already taken, and that it had all the approvals. There was nothing that I could suggest. He equally disarmed us by seeing us off on the porch and even opening the door of the car for the guests. Both Chairman and Dr Rokham were most impressed and thought they would have a fair evaluation of their proposals. I had to tell them otherwise. The decisions had already been made, and this entire act was only for showing!

In all these developments Air Commodore (Retd) M. Khaqan Abbassy, who was a minister in the Cabinet of Prime Minister Junejo, was a privy as I kept him fully briefed on all the discussions held. At this stage, I met with Major General (Retd) M. Rahim Khan, who was the Secretary of Defense. In the meeting with him, Abdullah Malik and

I placed all the facts and details before him, and in fact, we left a very comprehensive report with him to study. He said that he had already heard about some defects of the Type 21 Frigate and that he would give this his dispassionate and honest study and take whatever action that may be required he deemed fit. In all fairness to him, he wrote a direct letter to the President highlighting all the snags and the drawbacks in the decision making for the induction of Frigates in the Pakistan Navy. The President asked Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Rahim-ud-din Khan, to have the decision reviewed. His views I had already known as I had met him and placed all the details before him. He thought he does not understand the technical requirements of the naval ships and that it was best left to Naval Authorities to determine and decide. However, he assigned the task to Lieutenant General Refaqqat to carry out an inquiry and forward a report to him. This was done, but the report was just an eyewash. In fact, it just reproduced the remarks that General Rahim-ud-din had conveyed to me earlier when I met him.

A few days later I went to attend the wedding of the son of Lieutenant General Jehan Dad Khan, who was the Governor of the Sindh Province. I took Mr Jim White, the Sikorsky Aircraft representative who was visiting Pakistan, with me to this wedding. As we arrived at the Sindh House, Admiral T.K.Khan noticed us and made a beeline towards us. On approaching me, he said, " You are looking very forlorn today, and I also know the reason! For your information, the team of Vosper Thorny Croft is arriving next week, and we are going to have the contract signed for the purchase of Type 21 Frigates." I was taken aback at this sudden unabashedly arrogant display of an act, I considered treachery and unpatriotic. I retorted, "TK, I have no reason to feel forlorn as I am perfectly at peace with myself and my life. I know of the visit of your favourites. Go ahead and good luck to you, but let me tell you I will continue to do my damnedest to have this wretched deal cancelled." He laughed it away and left us to interact with others.

I had already discussed the matter with Khaqan Abbassy. He had told me that he had a meeting with Mr Junejo, the Prime Minister and advised him about this ill- advised deal. In the meeting, he emphatically and clearly had warned the Prime Minister, "If you do not cancel this deal, I will be the first person who will stand up on the floor of the house and expose all the details of this slanderous and damaging act to the Navy and the Country." Mr Junejo was rather surprised at the threatening remarks of Khaqan Abbassy. He answered back, "Why are you fighting with me? What can I do? When I sit at the meeting of the DCC, where the approval of this project was given, all the Admirals and Generals speak strongly for the choice of Type 21 Frigate. The Ministry of Defence Production team had conveyed their reservations to me about this, but they too are helpless when all the higher brass is supporting this ship." But when he realised that Khaqan was absolutely hell bent upon speaking against this in the National Assembly, he advised him, "If you want me to do something, then do me the favour of getting some points that we may suggest that the British must incorporate in this Frigate to make it acceptable to us. The modifications obviously should be of the nature that technically may not be easily possible to integrate." This had already been communicated to me by Khaqan, and I had requested Dr Rohkam for some brief and snap modifications that would rattle the British. Prompt came the reply. A list of five modifications was suggested. On the top, it laid down that since the aluminum superstructure had already proved to be most disastrous in the Falklands War, it must be replaced with the steel superstructure. When the British Team arrived, all beaming with joy to sign the deal, Ministry of Defence Production placed those demands on the table for the consideration and approval of the British before the contract could be signed. On seeing the modifications being suggested, the British hit the ceiling and expressed their anguish by saying that these are impossible to achieve. It would amount to designing and rebuilding a new ship altogether. They were told that as long as the defects of the Type 21 Frigate are not addressed and corrected, there can be no deal. That is how this despicable and ignominious chapter of decision making ended. The greed for the personal graft had become the overriding desire and factor, but it was arrested in time to save the Navy from a total disaster!

I have never met with Admiral (Retd) T. K. Khan since, but if I ever do, I would ask him the question to describe who is looking forlorn and what those confidential reasons were that were forcing him to put his choice to support a defective and inappropriate Frigate, which he was trying to inflict on the Pakistan Navy? The greed for commissions has become the bane of most part of the corruption that has become endemic, both in the Military and Civilian hierarchy. This must be rationalised if we have to address all acts of grafting and bribery. A reliable system for the revelations of details of commissions in every deal has to be regularised, and the income coming through these deals must be taxed, and the balance made the legitimate earning.

The era of General Zia came to an abrupt end with the crash of his aircraft. General Aslam Beg Mirza, who was the Vice Chief of Army Staff, was also in the same area. He flew back to Rawalpindi and called a small meeting which was attended by Air Chief Marshal Hakeem Ullah, the Chief of PAF and Lieutenant General Imran Khan, Corps Commander 11 Corps. At that meeting, while reviewing the situation, he was giving obvious hints of continuing the Martial Law. It was at the initiative of ACM Hakeemullah that this was changed to forming an Interim Government and holding the elections. It is believed that ACM Hakeemullah asked Lieutenant General Imran Khan in Pushto to convey his views and the same were forcefully done and hence the change of mind. General Aslam Beg now keeps proclaiming that he adopted the democratic way instead of continuing the Martial Law. He may well have taken that final decision and is now taking the credit, but only after sensing the mood.

## CHAPTER 13

## BENAZIR EMERGES ON THE POLITICAL SCENE

Even during the holding of the elections, General Aslam Beg, along with Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, who was Director General ISI, were all engaged in getting the results of their choice and tried to strengthen the opposition by forming IJI. But the popularity of Benazir Bhutto was at its peak, and they could only make a partial dent in her vote bank. In the elections, Benazir did not win absolute majority, but PPP emerged as the single largest party. When the time came to form the civilian government, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, tried all the other alternative choices, but having failed, he was looking at Benazir as the only likely choice as the leader of the Assembly. So reluctantly, they had to accept and reconcile to the name of Benazir as the only viable alternative left. Even in doing so, they still wanted to show their authority. When General Aslam Beg Mirza called her for a meeting, he made the likely Prime Minister to be kept waiting for nearly an hour before seeing her. How at different stages he tried to be defiant of the authority of the Prime Minister, are no secrets.

When Ghulam Ishaq decided to nominate Benazir Bhutto as the next Prime Minister, it did not come without his reservations. He informed her that she should first see the American Ambassador, Mr Robert Oakley, and for this he sent Mr Happy Minwala to drive her to his residence. When he arrived at the house of Dr Niazi, where she was staying, Benazir decided that she would much rather be driven to the Ambassador's residence by Tariq Akbar, son-in-law of Dr Niazi, rather than to accompany him. It was a friendly meeting, but to her surprise she was told that the American Government may have no objection to her becoming the Prime Minister, but on the conditions that she must include Lieutenant General (Retd) Sahibzada Yaqub Ali Khan as Foreign Minister in her Cabinet and take Mr V.A.Jaffery as her Economic Advisor. As she left the meeting, she was turning over this demand of the American Government in her mind, and decided to call a meeting of the Executive Committee of her party. She herself was not inclined to form the Government with these conditions imposed, but she wanted to consult the other members of her party. While she got herself dropped at Serena Hotel, she told Tariq Akbar to get CEC meeting convened at the house of Dr Niazi. Later, on her arrival, she asked for the advice of the members. In the discussion that ensued, Jehangir Badr, was most prominent and was very forcefully advocating that Pakistan People's Party must form the Government. The major reason that he gave was that PPP had been in the opposition for so long and that the Party and its workers had suffered the most. He pleaded that many of the workers were still languishing in jails and that the party must come into power to provide relief to them. This made Benazir change her earlier inclination not to form the Government with those conditions imposed on her. It clearly reflected as to how much influence and say the American Government had in choosing the Rulers of Pakistan.

It was under these circumstances that Benazir Bhutto took over the Office of the Prime Minister and thus became the first women of any Muslim country to hold this position. She was well educated, was intelligent and had the acumen, but lacked in experience of holding such high public office. Mr Bhutto had sensed that General Zia was not likely to spare his life; so he had picked on her to succeed him as the Party leader and had imparted as much training to her as was possible. He had given her all the advice and instructions on how to handle herself in emerging as a new political leader on the canvass of this Country. In particular, he had given her a detailed brief on all the political leadership of the Pakistan People's Party; in respect who to trust or not. In this context, he had told her that Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar is the most sincere, honest and a reliable person. She could always count on him, was his advice. On taking over her new office, Benazir immediately picked on Babar to become her Special Assistant. She did not regret this. He was a very sobering influence on all her policies and decisions. He was a very matured and experienced person and acted as an excellent guide for her. This helped her in the smooth transition in the holding and the conduct of her new but very important assignment as the Chief Executive of the Country at this young age. The choice of some other members of her Cabinet was also reasonably good. But it was the influence and the role of her husband, Asif Ali Zardari, that brought her some discredit and the tainting of the image of corruption on the Government.

After Benazir Bhutto had become the Prime Minister, one of the meetings that she called was exclusively restricted to a few people. She was present there along with Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar, her Advisor, Lieutenant General (Retd) Yaqub Ali, the Foreign Minister, Mr Robert Oakley the American Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr Humayun Khan the Foreign Secretary and Lieutenant General Hamid Gul Director General ISI. The Soviet Army had pulled out of Afghanistan, and it was a period of turmoil in that area. She opened the meeting with the simple remarks of "What about Jalalabad?" To this Lieutenant General Hamid Gul very promptly and enthusiastically replied to give him one week and he will accomplish capturing Jalalabad. General Babar inquired as to what troops he had in the area. He mentioned of some Mujahid Battalions occupying some heights which he indicated on the map. Babar's reaction was asking how these ragtag units will be able to attack and capture Jalalabad, which was held as a fortified position by regular Afghan army units. But General Hamid Gul was still very confident and claimed that he would do it. Babar's reaction was that if they refuse to give him this permission, he would go around saying that he would have captured Jalalabad, but the permission was not granted. Instead, he told him they will give him one month rather than a week to accomplish the task. The operation was finally launched to Capture Jalalabad, but it proved to be a disaster. The regular Afghan troops, as General Babar had envisaged, proved to be too strong and well entrenched. Some years later, at a meeting of the Pakistan Ex- Servicemen Association (PESA), when I broached the subject with Lieutenant General (Retd) Hamid Gul, he denied that he was the author of the plan to attack. His version was that it was the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto who asked him to capture Jalalabad and that he was against it. I gave him General Babar's version of the episode as stated above. His reaction was to call Babar as a liar. I was taken aback and had to tell him that I know Babar would not tell lies. To this, he remarked that I should ask some others who were present. This I did. I talked to Dr Humayun Khan and Lieutenant General (Retd) Yaqub Ali Khan, and they both told me that General Babar's version was the correct one. After this fiasco, Lieutenant General Hamid Gul was changed as DG ISI and sent to Multan as the Corps Commander. Lieutenant General (Retd) Shams-ur-Rahman Kallue was picked as the new ISI chief. He was an excellent officer and had a good track record. It was for the first time that a retired officer had been placed in charge of this sensitive institution, but some sleuths in this set up were bent on to making him a failure in this setup. General Kallue was a gentleman and did not prove strong enough to handle these dissenters. Thus this experiment failed. After this Benazir Bhutto asked Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Zulfikar Ali Khan to compile a report as to how all the intelligence agencies should be reformed to make them more dynamic, result orientated and devoid of all political role. Such a reorganization was badly needed because although the ISI had an excellent track record, it's dabbling in political affairs had got it a bad name. This aspect needed to be controlled. The report was compiled and sent to the Prime Minister, but it was never implemented as the Benazir Government was dismissed before she could act. It lies in cold storage since then.

Even after the assumption of office as Prime Minister, the conspiracies to destabilize Benazir Government went on unabated. Nawaz Sharif, who had won the elections in Punjab and had become the Chief Minister, unleashed a severe campaign of maligning her and defiance of her authority as the Prime Minister. He would not even extend the due protocol as Prime Minister, on her visits to the Province. The catapulting to power of Nawaz Sharif is itself something to ponder about. It was Lieutenant General (Retd) Ghulam Jillani who became the Governor of Punjab on imposing Martial Law, who had a hand in first picking him up as his Finance Minister and then building him up as a political leader to counter the popularity of Mr Bhutto and his party. He was his progeny, and General Zia took further interest in his building up as an alternative leadership in the country. This was his stepping stone for his political role, and he was given all the support and help. He was financially strengthened and also got the support and help of the intelligence agencies. The civil administration was also used to promote his elections. That is how he emerged on the political scene. Since then he has very cleverly exploited his position as Chief Minster first and later as the Prime Minister. Using his wealth for harnessing, his political support became a norm, and this has since become the curse of all the elections. The making of money and using it for elections, and rigging of the elections became the distinct pattern, and he has turned into a complete science. He had no compulsions of morality, to keep the distinction between his public office and his family business interest. He in fact fully used his position to exploit and build up his family Business Empire.

Another notable mention of the Benazir's first term as Prime Minister is that she was not vindictive. She and her family had suffered so much at the hands of the prolonged period of military rule, her father had been hanged for what clearly is being termed as a judicial murder, and the workers of her party had been lashed and put behind bars for the crime of raising slogans to support Bhutto and the party. But yet she took no revenge. Instead, she coined the phrase, "That Democracy is the best revenge."

General Aslam Baig Mirza also held no brief for the Benazir Government and with this the gap between the Military and Benazir Government kept widening. It was in this background that one-day General Baig sent his Director Military Intellgence, Major General (Later Lieutenant General) Asad Durrani, to the office of the Prime Minister with a message. He barged into the office of Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar unannounced, who was the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, and told him he had brought a message from the COAS for the Prime Minister. Babar first thought that since he had no prior appointment, he must send him back. But he on a later thought that he may have some very sudden important message to give, and hence he ushered him into the Office of the Prime Minister. The message was a veiled threat. It discreetly suggested that you better act and do this and this or else you will be sorted out. He was told to immediately leave the office. General Aslam Beg Mirza conspired with President Ghulam Ishaq and had Benazir Bhutto's legal and democratically elected government dismissed and sent home. This was his pretense to be supportive of democracy. His personality and wisdom are too well known and need no further clarifications.

After the dismissal of the Government of Benazir, fresh elections were held. This time, true to their plans, the duo of President Ghulam Ishaq and General Aslam Beg, had the desired results. I do not want to go into all the morbid details, but a new pattern had been developed and is still working. The ill-gotten wealth is used lavishly and with this all the other support is mustered. The other institutions and agencies are also fine-tuned to lend support to the party of the choice. I was amazed to learn that how Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, who had been earlier, removed by Benazir from his position as head of ISI, and was now posted as Corps Commander at Multan, was meeting the different politicians and in particularly advising and picking the PML likely candidates for the coming elections. And all this was happening under the nose of the COAS. Was this the role left for the Army?

It was in December 1992, that my elder son Akbar got married to Mona the youngest daughter of Dr Zafar Khan Niazi. I had heard about him and his close association with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. But I had not known him intimately to understand his deep commitment in his friendship of Bhutto and his family. As I got to know him more closely, I learned some insight of his deep devotion and as to how he had accepted that responsibility. I was told that when Bhutto was in Jail, Dr Zafar Khan went to see him as a courtesy because he had known well and now that he was in trouble he felt it as his obligation to inquire about him. When he met Bhutto, he told him he cannot trust anyone else, and considering that Dr Niazi was sincere to him, he was taking the liberty to ask him if he would look after his family if anything happens to him. Though Dr Niazi felt honoured, that Bhutto out of all the people that he knew, had picked on him to entrust with this big responsibility, but he told him that he cannot give him any commitment right there, but he would have to consult all his family members before he could give him any firm undertaking. On return, when he broached this subject with all his close family members, he was pleasantly astonished at the response of all of them. In one voice they told him they are prepared to stand by Bhutto and his family through thick and thin and in his times of trials and tribulations. Dr Niazi told them about all serious consequences and fall outs of this enormous responsibility that they all were committing to undertake, but the opinion was still solemnly to support this undertaking. It showed their strength of character and devotion to Bhutto family. When Dr Niazi later told Bhutto about this considered decision of not only himself but his entire family, he was thrilled at that and expressed his gratefulness to them all. How Dr Niazi faithfully as a man and a genuine friend solidly stood with Mr. Bhutto and his family in his times of tribulations is a unique and honorable example. What all wrath he faced of the martial law authorities and in particular General Zia, in this inter-fold is a separate gory chapter in which I will not dwell for now. But I hope someone will do justice to him and record all the details of the great personal sacrifice that he made to honour his pledge given to Bhutto. It truly reflects a man that Dr Zafar Niazi was and how he will be remembered. He stands tall and honourable and needs recognition.

When finally General Aslam Beg Mirza was to retire, President Ghulam Ishaq Khan picked on General Asif Nawaz Janjua as the next choice for the position of COAS. He was a professional soldier and was adequately suited for this top assignment. Lieutenant General Hameed Gul, who was junior to him, still maintains that he should have been the next Army Chief, but I cannot see any justifications. Other than dabbling in political affairs as the head of ISI and his famous act of forming IJI, he hardly had anything to show in the way of his performance in both the wars. General Janjua knew the affairs of Karachi well, and it was expected that the situation in Karachi will turn around soon, but he could not complete his full tenure and died while in office. The next choice fell on General Abdul Waheed Kakkar. He had no outstanding professional background, but he was a gentleman and fitted well in this slot because of his background as hailing from Balochistan. Equally, there is nothing spectacular about his tenure except that he sent both the President and the Prime Minister home and held fresh elections.

And In reflecting at the choices of all the Army Chief’s of the past, I maintained that hardly anyone except Lieutenant General Gul Hassan could be termed as truly professional. Though he too had his kinks, he was a soldier all the way. He was a man with a vision and had the drive to put things right. The rest hardly had the stature and did not prove equal to the task. It was my strong conviction that the promotion to the top slot in the army should be entirely on merits, and that his performance in actual battle must be given the utmost importance and given due weight age, rather than any excellence in any staff assignment. It is the command experience that held the key, and most had been held lacking in that. This was my bone of contention and my major differences with Army Higher Command, both in 1971 and 1975, when I resigned.

At the golf course, I met with Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Mohammad Tariq. I knew that he had served with 3 FF Regiment in the Sialkot Sector and had given a very brave and soldierly account of himself in the battles at Charwa, Phillarauh and Chawinda. He was decorated with an award of Sitara-e-Juraat for all his gallant acts. I got to know him well, and we maintained a good and close relationship. When he was Corps Commander at Gujranwala, he came to see me at my house. While we were busy talking about the current situation in the country, he made a remark which immediately attracted my attention. He said" Most politicians try to contact us, the senior serving army officers and lose no opportunity to come close to us. But what is glaring is that no political leadership of Pakistan People's Party ever makes that effort or attempt." I was rather amazed at the remarks and asked him to elaborate. He mentioned, "It is right from the days of General Zia-ul-Haq, General Beg and all other Army Chief's that brainwashing had been going on of all the senior serving officers in the Army that the Bhutto family are traitors and are not sincere to this country." He further asked that Major General (Retd) Babar and others like me are well respected in the army, so why don't we try to mix and come in contact with the senior serving personnel of the Armed Forces? His advice was that it should be done to clear the image of PPP as being painted in the army circles by the interested parties. I told him I was not a member of the party and that I will brief Babar about it. PPP was in the opposition. Major General (Retd) Babar mentioned this to Benazir. Sometime later, I visited Karachi and was staying at a hotel when at 10:30 PM I received a call from Benazir Bhutto. She told me she had learned from General Babar that I was in Karachi and also mentioned that he had told her about the views of the army about PPP, which I had earlier discussed with him. She asked me if I could come over and meet with her. I did so, and when we met face to face, she was rather emotional and very passionately said, "You tell me what the Bhutto family has to do to prove their patriotism. My father was killed and is buried here. My two brothers were also killed, and they too are buried here. And let me assure you when I die, I too will be buried in the soil of Pakistan." She proved prophetically right. To calm her, I told her that these are not my views but are the views on the lines of which the senior officers of the Armed Forces are being brainwashed and that you have to correct this image. The next thing that I told her was that people think that her husband is corrupt. Her reply was that she had been hearing these rumors. I had to politely tell her that she has to act and neutralise this slandering of the image of the Bhutto family and also address the charges of corruption against her husband. She agreed for the need to do that, and I inferred that she will act.

On my return from Karachi, I met with General Babar and briefed him about my meeting with Benazir Bhutto. He thought there was no need for him to interact with the senior serving officers of the Armed Forces. They all know me too well and that I don't have to explain or prove my loyalty to anyone and show my sense of patriotism. It was typical of him. He did not fully understand how the undercurrents work! On the corruption of Zardari, he agreed that something needs to be done.

When Benazir came into office as Prime Minister for the second term, she picked on Major General (Retd) N.K.Babar to be her Interior Minister. For these elections, Babar got the party ticket from his home constituency of Nowshera. From a soldier he turned into a politician, and had carried out his election campaign with full vigour, enthusiasm and dogged determination. It was a new field for him, but he was successful. Since he now had the mandate of the people; he was more assertive, demanding and forthright. For the office of the President she picked on Mr Farooq Leghari. During her this tenure, time arose to appoint the next Army Chief. Lieutenant General Jehangir Karamat was the senior most, but in my opinion was lacking in war experience and conduct and had reputation only on account of staff appointments held. I had also heard of another farreaching failure, which reflected adversely on his character. He was due to retire before the tenure of General Kakkar expired. To keep himself in service till that date, he changed the date of the assumption of the rank of his command as Corps Commander to a later date. This I thought was not becoming of an officer. In comparison, Lieutenant General Mohammad Tariq had a much better record of service as a soldier, both in combat and in peace. Benazir Bhutto was now the Prime Minister, and Major General (Retd) Babar was the Minister of Interior. I told Babar that it was high time that this Army should have a professional in Command who has foremost stood the test of battle more than anything else. He agreed with me. When we looked at the list of seniority, the name of Lieutenant General Mohammad Tariq stood out. He was number two on the list, only junior to Lieutenant General Jehangir Karamat. I strongly recommended his name and Babar agreed with me. When he mentioned this to the Prime Minister, she too agreed and advised Major General (Retd) Babar that he may tell President Farooq Leghari of the choice. There were no secret meetings, and the Prime Minister told Major General (Retd) Babar that if he thinks he was the best choice; she was in full approval. It was only at a wedding reception that I introduced him to the Prime Minister and two had not even formally met. All she said was that she had full faith and trusts our choice. When Babar mentioned this choice of the Prime Minister to President Leghari, he remarked that he agreed that he was a good option, but there are some other names as well. In the appointment of the COAS, there are always big lobbies at work. The American and CIA interests have strong considerations and connotations and are a big factor. It seemed that it weighed more heavily on the mind of President Farooq Leghari, but we were deprived again of a real professional soldier becoming the Army Chief.

During the tenure of General Jehangir Karamat as the Army Chief, he took with him Major General (Later General) Parvez Musharraf, who was the Director General Military Operations (DGMO) at GHQ, to the office of the Prime Minister and suggested that she may like to have a briefing for particular operations that he had in mind. The Prime Minister called in Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar to also attend and listen to the briefing. With a lot of enthusiasm, he unfolded what later became the famous operations to capture the heights of Kargil. General Babar was astonished at this absurd plan. He questioned him as to what was to happen after those heights were captured? He further asked him that if he has taken into consideration the reaction of the Indian Army when this operation is launched and succeeds? He had no vision or answer to that, and General Babar had it shot down by the Prime Minister. It is a different matter that when General Parvaiz Musharraf became the Army Chief; he duped Nawaz Sharif to approve the plan and launched the illogical and bizarre operation that he had in mind. The heights were quickly captured, and the professional acumen of General Parvaiz Musharraf could not even envisage the likely reaction of the enemy, and his lack of any contingent plans to meet with this, was all but inevitable. He probably had paid scant attention to this most likely fallout. To crown his stupidity, he had not even consulted his Air Force Chief. When sometime later I met Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Parvaiz Mehdi at the Islamabad Golf Course, after he had retired, he told me, “Sir, you in khaki think that you own this country. You can always impose all decisions that you want without even consulting your other colleague Chiefs in uniform.” He then unfolded how this operation was launched without even giving a hint to the Air Force and Naval Chief’s! Only when the Indian Air Force got active was the help of PAF sought, but it was too late. I was amazed at the total lack of harmony and co-ordination at these top levels of our decision makers.

Could there be anything more criminal?

It was in March 1995 that I ran into Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto at a function. She had known me because of my friendship and association with Major General (Retd) Naseerullah Babar. We had met several times earlier, including her visit to our Solvent Extraction Plant at Kabirwala. She was immediately reminded of that and asked me to look into the possibility of promotion of the Canola Oil Seed crop in Pakistan. She also told me that during her visit to Malaysia recently, Prime Minister Mahatar Abdur Rahman had suggested to her that to overcome the acute edible oil shortages in Pakistan, Canola Crop is best suited for its climate and soil conditions. I had not heard this name before. So I consulted Dr Zafar Altaf, who was the Secretary of Food, Agriculture and Livestock in the Federal Government. I had got to know him after his appointment to that position and had developed a lot of respect for his opinion, his visionary approach, and his integrity. He is a dynamic man and a rare breed of those CSP officers who could take decisions and stand up to all kinds of pressures and lobbies operating in the country. His background is also very interesting; he has done his MA in Psychology, after joining CSP he did his doctorate in International Economics from Birmingham University and MBA from Harvard University. He was an avowed reader who would read a book a day. He had done no formal training in agriculture, but it had become his passion. He had completed a very extensive study and was keeping himself updated with all the latest research and recent developments in this vast field. He was ready to plunge into some not too so well tested domains, but was prepared to take risks to get results. His opponents would criticise him for this, but mostly he was right in his judgments and initiatives. Most of the qualified scientists in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and at PARC, and even those holding Ph.D. Degrees could not argue with him and had to accept his advice and decisions.

He got a sped up promotion to the rank of a Federal Secretary. It was quite an interesting decision by Benazir when she became Prime Minister for her second tenure. At a Cabinet Meeting, she was asking questions related to Agriculture from the incumbent Secretary. To her surprise, he could not give any satisfactory answers; in fact, all the answers were being given by Dr Zafar Altaf, who was Chairman Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC). At that she remarked that, “If you are to give all the answers then why should I not have you as the Secretary Food and Agriculture.” Immediately, she gave the orders for his posting. And she did not regret. He served in that position for three years in Benazir

Government and gave her an Agricultural growth of 11%. Never in the period, either prior to it or even after that, have such growths been recorded.

When I met him for the first time, I asked him the reason for the lower yields of wheat production in Pakistan compared to the other countries and even including Indian Punjab. His answer was simple: the sowing was late in December. He further stated that as long as we did not bring the sowing in the month of early November, we cannot expect any remarkable increase in our yields of Wheat Crop. I had heard the same views from my father-in-law, Mian Muhammad Afzal, who was the first Agricultural Development Commissioner of Pakistan. He told me about this way back in 1962, and I was wondering as to why no steps had been taken to bring about this change of sowing patterns. The reason for this was that the major crop Cotton, was maturing late and the farmers would try to take the maximum yield of that rather than do early Wheat sowing. To put things right, Dr Zafar Altaf started laying emphasis on developing early sowing varieties of Cotton Crops. When these types were successfully developed, and the sowing of the Cotton Crop started in even February and March, the sowing of wheat became timely, and since then remarkable results have been achieved in our per acre yields of Wheat. The credit for this would entirely go to Dr Zafar Altaf for his visionary and dynamic approach.

He was equally keen to promote the local production of the oilseed crops. When I had first met him, I asked him for his advice if we should sell off our Solvent Extraction Plant or not, since there was a lack of availability of oilseeds in the country. His reply was pragmatic, “I am here to see that the Solvent Extraction Industry grows and flourishes as without this we cannot have any meaningful increase in local edible oil production. I cannot be a party to the advice to sell or close this vital industry”was his considered opinion. He was clearly committed to taking all steps needed to make this industry viable. The import bill of the edible oil was soaring to over one Billion Dollars in 1995. The edible oil import mafia and the corrupt and incompetent set up of the Ghee Corporation of Pakistan, after some initial results had allowed the program to slump to stagnation. Some millions of dollars of foreign aid and our own investments had only yielded marginal results. When I told him of the Canola program as suggested by the Prime Minister he just enthusiastically jumped at the idea. He was wholly supportive of it. He dictated to me a summary that the Prime Minister had asked me to send to her. It suggested the formation of Pakistan Oilseeds Development

Board (PODB) and a request for a grant of Rs Twenty Million to promote the Canola Crop. When the Prime Minister saw the summary, she acted immediately. She told me she will not give the grant but would provide the loan for that amount. She also told Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar, to go to the ECC meeting being held that day. She said that since she was not attending the meeting, he should go there and take her message to get the funds released. This was done. The PODB was formed, and the needed funds were released the same day to start the Canola Program.

For the ongoing Canola program, a grant of Canadian Dollars Fourteen Million and a matching grant for the same amount was given by the Government of Pakistan to BARD at National Agricultural Research Council (NARC). The work had been going on for some years, but it was primarily confined to the Barani Areas only, and claims of the acreage of some 6000- 7,000 Acres were made by Dr Mumtaz Ahmad who was heading this set up at NARC in March 1995.

When the funds were allocated to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, for the Canola Program, Dr Zafar Altaf decided to opt for the route of Public /Private Sector co-operation to handle the new impetus for the promotion of this crop. He took this decision because of the past experience of both the programs of Sunflower and Canola promotion. As described earlier, many years of efforts and the spending of massive amounts of funds had hardly shown any results on the ground. He took the decision to place the funds at the disposal of our Company Effef Industries Limited and gave them clear tasks and goals to achieve. He asked that all the produce of the farmer's current season Canola Crop should be picked up at the rate of Rupees Five hundred and Fifty per 40 KG. If this was to be done, the farmers would take to sowing Canola over increased areas most willingly in the coming sowing season. Out of this crop bought, he tasked Effef Industries to produce sufficient quantities of high- quality Canola Seed which should cover the sowing of area of 100,000 Acres, the target he fixed for the 1965 season in October / November. I tried to resist undertaking this significant effort and asked to be excused, but upon his insistence, had to accept it. He said, "If I were to place these funds at the disposal of the Public Sector organizations, the results would not be any different to what happened to all the massive funds given to them for these tasks in the past." For smooth implementation of his instructions, he instructed the PODB to oversee and coordinate the entire programme and also to check the quality of the seed produced. In the past, farmers had complained about the quality of the sowing seed provided to him. He left me with no option. I had to accept this enormous responsibility and challenge. I decided to get the help of Data Seeds, a reputable seed company managed by Faez Rahim-ud-Din and his friend Farooq Naseem. They were quite dynamic and innovative in this field of producing highquality seed and had a wonderful organization on the ground. With these arrangements made, we mopped up the entire crop of the farmers at the price so fixed and also produced the 200 Tons of Quality sowing seed. The challenge was as to how to extend the area to 100,000 Acres, the target so fixed for the next year. I told Dr Zafar Altaf that in my opinion, it may not be possible to take the area under Canola sowing to his desired target if we were to confine ourselves to only the Barani area of Potohar, where the potential was limited. In my opinion, I suggested to him that we explore the untapped areas of Southern Punjab. He agreed to it. In the meeting held by him to give his policy for the promotion of oilseed crops, which was attended by all the oilseed crops experts and scientists, he raised this idea. There were some strong reservations expressed. They told him that climate in that area is not suitable for this crop as it had been developed in Canada for colder climates. But he was of the opinion that since the genes for this had come from “Desi Sarsoon,” which is also grown in a hotter climate, it would adapt itself to those conditions. He took a calculated risk.

To give impetus to the oilseeds development plan, Dr Zafar Altaf while on a visit to America arranged an enormous financial support package from the United States Department of Agriculture. They first circumvented the Pressler Amendment which was in vogue for Pakistan and under it no aid was permissible. After having done that, it was agreed that Pakistan will get 44 Million Dollars worth of soybean seed as a grant every year over six years. This seed was to be crushed at the Solvent Plants in the country, and the proceeds would promote the sowing of various oilseeds crops in Pakistan. The first shipment arrived in September 1996.

A team, under Dr Waqar Ahmad Managing Director PODB, was sent to Australia to study their experience and also to look for some new viable varieties as Shirallee variety had become old and in danger of breaking down and losing out its potential. On return, this team suggested the import of three new varieties, Dunkeld, Rainbow and Oscar from Australia for the sowing season of 1996. The sowing season of 1965 for the oilseed crops was successfully accomplished and targets achieved. In this, the floods of 1965 came as a great boon as the Cotton crop over a large area was destroyed, and fields were available to be sown with the new crops, and Canola fitted quite ideally. The only problem was that this crop had not so far been tested by the farmers, and so they were reluctant to take the risk. But after hectic efforts and a lot of persuasion, we managed to achieve our sowing targets of 100,000 Acres. As an incentive, a lot of seed was distributed on credit with the promise of payment if the crop was grown successfully. We took this risk. It all paid. We had farmers who had sown Canola over vast areas of as big as 2-300 Acres. Since the crop condition was good and some big farmers were also quite excited, Dr Zafar Altaf decided to visit the area and see the crop for himself. He was to arrive by the afternoon flight from Islamabad to Multan, and we had planned to take him straight to the fields of Dr Khawar in Qitalpur Area, which was an hour's drive from the airport. It started to rain, and due to the inclement weather, the flight got delayed. On his landing at 2200 Hours Dr Zafar Altaf was still keen to visit the area. When I contacted Dr Khawar, he seemed equally eager to receive him and said that he would make all the arrangements for him to go to the fields in the rain and to inspect the Canola Crop. It was at 2300 Hrs that we reached the area. Dr Khawar was there to receive us. It was literally pouring, but the guest and the hosts were all committed to proceed to see the crop. He had arranged for tractors for us to drive to the fields as the cars could not go on the track, and on reaching there, we were thrilled to see that he had placed tractors all around and under their full lights we had an excellent view of his outstanding Canola Crop. He was happy to say that he was totally satisfied and that he knew now in his mind whether it can successfully grow under those conditions. This pleased Dr Zafar Altaf too as he felt satisfied that his decision had worked and he equally also complimented our team for the effort and the results achieved. The next day we visited the fields of some other big farmers who had successfully sown Canola over hundreds of Acres of their land. One farmer, Ayaz from Pathafi area of Muzaffar Garh, who had Canola grown over 300 Acres was declared the best farmer and was presented with a tractor by Dr Zafar Altaf. On return, I wrote a brief note for the information of the Prime Minister and to tell her as to how successfully the Canola Plantations had been carried out. It also suggested to her to find time to have a brief aerial view of the area and to see the success of Canola program for herself. She could not find time herself, but she asked Nawab Yousuf Talpur to undertake the visit on her behalf and to report back to her. This was done, and hence the first phase of achieving our targets was accomplished. When the crop was harvested, and all the monies were received from the farmers, whom sales on credit were made. The full amount of Rupees Twenty Millions with full markup was returned. The Prime Minister was thrilled. She remarked that there could be no better example of Private/Public Sector venture having been so successfully completed.

Dr Zafar Altaf had built up a superb team comprising members from both the Public and Private Sectors. They worked in close cohesion with each other and with missionary zeal. The results were quite transparent. With a loan of Rs. Twenty Million, the canola area was taken from 7,000 Acres to 100,000 Acres in just six months, and the total loan with the markup had been paid back. This remarkable increase in the area did not cost the Government even a penny. Everyone was asking if there could be any better approach to progress!

Along with the Canola crop, the Sunflower area also witnessed a remarkable increase. In, this again the private seed companies had a role and hand to play. ICI (Pakistan) notably played a very active part both in providing excellent quality Sunflower Seed and the hybrid Hyola seed for Canola.

With these very encouraging results, preparations were afoot for the coming season of 1996, sowing season of Canola Crop. First, a target of one million Acres was fixed, but it was readjusted to 500,000 Acres as the original target was being very ambitious. This needed some 1,000 Tons of both the new imported varieties and the local Shirallee variety of Canola seed. I told Dr Zafar Altaf that since we were not a Seed Company, this task must be given to Data Seed, who had been of great help in the last year's efforts. He agreed to it. He got the approval of the Minister for a Public/Private Sector Agreement and drafted the one on the lines of the previous year's agreement. Data Seed had initially agreed to undertake this enormous task, but when they read the terms and the conditions, they backed out. They maintained that it had all responsibilities and conditions imposed on them with barely any margins of profits for them. Dr Zafar Altaf tried to prevail upon them to do it as a National cause, but they maintained that they were a commercial company and cannot afford to take any risks without a guarantee of reasonable margins of profits for them. With these developments, Dr Zafar Altaf came back to me and said that he had no choice left but to again entrust me with this task. He maintained that there was hardly any time left as the sowing season was fast approaching and the seed requirements, both the imported and the local varieties, had to be met. This hardly left me with any choice and an agreement between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and Effef Industries was signed to proceed with the task. This time the Government felt very encouraged and readily gave a loan of Rupees Sixty Millions.

With these big decisions having been made, we all had to work at an increased hectic pace to cope up with the ambitious challenges and the tasks so set. Dr Waqar Malik took a trip to Baluchistan, where an enormous potential for the growth of this crop existed and induced the farmers to take an interest in the increased sowing of Canola crop. Our representative had also accompanied him on the trip, and he gave the assurance to the farmers that Effef Industries Limited will purchase all the produce at the prices fixed.

To give added boosts to the program of increased edible oilseed production in the country, Dr Zafar Altaf as described earlier had made the arrangements to have the waiver of Pressler Amendment for the grant of Soybean Seed worth Forty-Four Millions Dollars annually for Six Years. This vast amount was to come to the Ministry of Food, Livestock and Agriculture and would have met all the financial requirements for a massive undertaking to make the country self-sufficient in the production of edible oil. The import bill of edible oil in 1965/1966 was over a billion dollars. It was the second largest import item after POL. The Cabinet readily gave its approval to the summary sent by the Ministry. Since the sowing season of oilseed crops was fast approaching and significant funds were required to mop up the entire crop, arrangements were hurriedly finalized to import soybean seed worth Dollars Forty-Four Millions under this grant. To ease the supervision of the crushing of this imported American Seed, Mr Morrison, the Agricultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, suggested that its distribution for the first year should be confined to only 4-5 plants as they may not get enough staff to work with more than that number. So the allocations for this consignment were restricted to only five solvent plants.

There were some protests, but the Ministry limited this distribution to only those five plants which were engaged in the oilseed promotion program. There was no allocation of funds for its transportation, so the plants which had been assigned this consignment had to provide all the freight and other relevant charges.

From the Canola Crop bought during the harvesting of 1966, we processed 1200 Tons of pure Canola variety of local Shirallee with the cooperation of Data Seeds. Another 220 Tons of new varieties we imported from Australia. To keep its vitality, it was kept in a state-of-the-art air conditioned seed house specially built for it at the cost of Rupees Ten Million. With all these decisions having been taken, we started undertaking the entire campaign with all sincerity and full effort. Millions of leaflets were distributed all over the potential areas from the air. Our teams, along with the experienced people of Data Seed and PODB, toured the areas extensively on the ground with vehicles equipped with

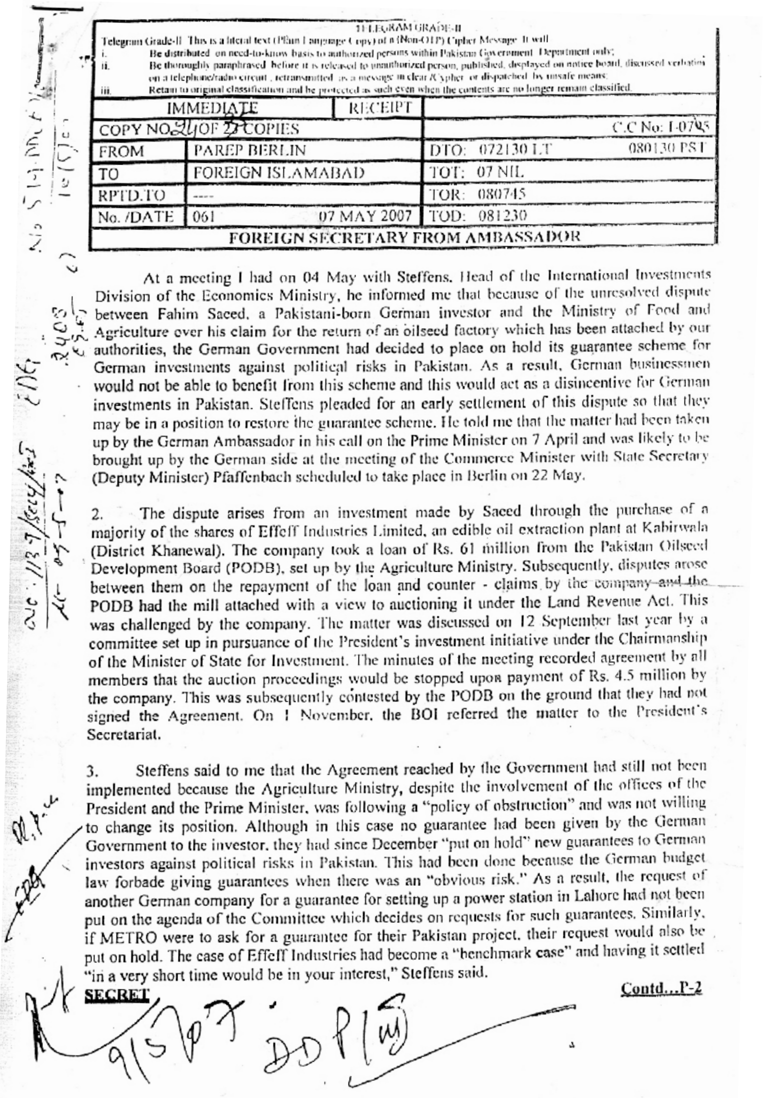
TV Cameras and educated the people on sowing and the comparative advantages of this crop as compared to the other alternatives. But despite all the efforts, the target could not be achieved, and we could all collectively cover an area of some 300,000 Acres. The balance of the seed left over and lying stored at the air-conditioned seed house of Effef Industries had to be picked up by PODB at the rates as laid down in our mutual agreement drawn. But PODB refused to honour the agreement and hence prolonged litigation ensued.

A very comprehensive plan was drawn to provide growth to the oilseeds production and was fully under implementation. The sowing season had been successfully completed; the Soybean shipment under the grant of American Government had arrived at Karachi and was being offloaded for distribution to different solvent plants as per the allotment.

All arrangements made were smoothly working. It was on November 4, 1996, that President Farooq Leghari dismissed Benazir Government and replaced it with an interim government headed by Malik Meeraj Khalid. Senator Shafqat Mahmud was appointed as Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock. I had known him. While he was Secretary Finance in the Nawaz Sharif's Government in Punjab, he came to see me with a relative of his who was my friend and requested for his posting to the Centre as he could not adjust himself with this set up in the Provincial Government. Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar was the Advisor to the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto at that time. I took him with me to meet General Babar. Babar told me that since I had brought him, he would eventually adjust him in the Prime Minister's Secretariat. This he did. Shafqat Mahmud worked there and became very close to Benazir Bhutto. He developed political ambitions and decided to resign from his service. He used the close contacts that he had established with Benazir, to get himself nominated as a Senator. Apparently, he had now betrayed her and was working in collusion with Farooq Leghari. This change in him did upset me, but in the cause of the bigger program of development of oilseed crops, I decided to meet with him and brief him about its importance and relevance to our economy. He listened to me very attentively and said, "I know Dr Zafar Altaf, who was my senior in the service and I have a lot of respect for him. I will work with him very closely to ensure that it proceeds smoothly." I was relieved and satisfied with this assurance. This belief was only to be shaken after a few days when I heard that Dr Zafar Altaf had been removed as Secretary and had been replaced with Mehboob Ahmad. In anger, I barged into his office. I questioned him as to why he had removed Dr Zafar Altaf when such a pivotal program was being undertaken by this Ministry. His reply was that he was not aware of this posting and now that he knows, he will try to stop this. He just bluffed! Mischief was at work. I learned later that one Haji Bashir of Wali Oil Mills, which was also a Solvent Extraction Plant, did not get the Soybean allotted from the first shipment, and had used his contacts to get all these decisions taken, reversed from the Interim Prime Minister. Wittingly or unwittingly, Shafqat Mahmud was a party to this. He cancelled all the previous allocations made, and all other arrangements for the promotion of Canola Programme, including the Agreement signed between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and Effef Industries.

I tried to explain to him the importance of this huge financial aid that Dr Zafar Altaf had arranged and stressed on him the urgency of securing this program rather than put it in jeopardy. But to him, it appears, the case of non-allotment of Soybean to Haji Bashir, of Wali Oil Mills was more important. To resolve the matter, a meeting was held and was attended by all the Solvent Plants. The Muslim Commercial Bank, who had arranged the L/C for this shipment, was also represented as the consignment was in their custody. It was amicably settled that the shipment will be distributed to all the plants concerned equitably and that from the next shipment the original five allottees will be given the balance of their allotment to make up the quota assigned to them. The Bank also approved the distribution under their supervision and guaranteed that the proceeds worth Dollars Forty-Four Million will be reimbursed to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. This was the perfect solution, but for some strange reasons, the Minister cancelled all the previous allotments and ordered the cash sale of the shipment. This led to litigations as many cases were filed and stay orders were got by the original allottees that had provided all the freight and other relevant charges as advance. This resulted in a loss of Dollars Fifteen Million. To further compound the matters, the Ministry, under the pressure of poultry feed lobby, arranged the next shipment of soybean meal rather than the soybean seed. No prior commitments on price and the other related matters were got from any of the parties concerned. This resulted in a complete fiasco. And it caused a further loss of Dollars Twenty Millions. At this stage, the USAID scrapped the entire program. What a loss and who was responsible? This matter could not be investigated. But the role and part of Shafqat Mahmud will remain the most prominent. Now that he has joined Imran Khan, one hopes he can display better judgment. He also betrayed Benazir in the trust she placed in him. The question would be, does he have the character to prove loyal to his new party?

A lot of litigation ensued. Our unit Effef Industries was sealed under a unique process of the Board of Land Revenue. We had earlier filed a case of damages against PODB in the Civil Court at Khanewal, and the same was nearing the verdict. Strangely, this process was stayed via court order. We appealed against this in the High Court and even in the Supreme Court, but to no avail. It was at this stage that one of our partners, who was a German national, approached the German Government for intervention. When they read all the background and even the judgements of all the Courts, they were convinced that no justice had been provided to us and intervened very forcefully. Our Ambassador to Germany was summoned by their Ministry of Economic Affairs and given a very stern and direct message that the German Government had stopped all the investments in Pakistan till the case of our Industry, Effef Industries, mentioned by name, was amicably resolved. The cypher message sent by our Ambassador is placed below:-



TELEGRAM GRADE-II

Telegram Grade-II This is a literal text (Plain Language Copy) of a (Non-OTP) Cipher Message. It will

i. Be distributed on need-to-know basis to authorized persons within Pakistan Government Department only;

ii. Be thoroughly paraphrased before it is released to unauthorized person, published, displayed on notice board, discussed verbatim on a telephone/radio circuit, retransmitted as a message in clear /Cypher or dispatched by unsafe means;

iii. Retain to original classification and be protected as such even when the contents are no longer remain classified.

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| RPTD.TO | ---- | TOR: 080745 | |
| No. /DATE | 061 07 MAY 2007 | TOD: 081230 | |

FOREIGN SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

At a meeting I had on 04 May with Steffens, Head of the International Investments Division of the Economics Ministry, he informed me that because of the unresolved dispute between Fahim Saeed, a Pakistani-born German investor and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture over his claim for the return of an oilseed factory which has been attached by our authorities, the German Government had decided to place on hold its guarantee scheme for German investments against political risks in Pakistan. As a result, German businessmen would not be able to benefit from this scheme and this would act as a disincentive for German investments in Pakistan. Steffens pleaded for an early settlement of this dispute so that they may be in a position to restore the guarantee scheme. He told me that the matter had been taken up by the German Ambassador in his call on the Prime Minister on 7 April and was likely to be brought up by the German side at the meeting of the Commerce Minister with State Secretary (Deputy Minister) Pfaffenbach scheduled to take place in Berlin on 22 May.

2. The dispute arises from an investment made by Saeed through the purchase of a majority of the shares of Effeff Industries Limited, an edible oil extraction plant at Kabirwala (District Khanewal). The company took a loan of Rs. 61 million from the Pakistan Oilseed Development Board (PODB), set up by the Agriculture Ministry. Subsequently, disputes arose between them on the repayment of the loan and counter - claims by the ~~company and the~~ PODB had the mill attached with a view to auctioning it under the Land Revenue Act. This was challenged by the company. The matter was discussed on 12 September last year by a committee set up in pursuance of the President's investment initiative under the Chairmanship of the Minister of State for Investment. The minutes of the meeting recorded agreement by all members that the auction proceedings would be stopped upon payment of Rs. 4.5 million by the company. This was subsequently contested by the PODB on the ground that they had not signed the Agreement. On 1 November, the BOI referred the matter to the President's Secretariat.

3. Steffens said to me that the Agreement reached by the Government had still not been implemented because the Agriculture Ministry, despite the involvement of the offices of the President and the Prime Minister, was following a "policy of obstruction" and was not willing to change its position. Although in this case no guarantee had been given by the German Government to the investor, they had since December "put on hold" new guarantees to German investors against political risks in Pakistan. This had been done because the German budget law forbade giving guarantees when there was an "obvious risk." As a result, the request of another German company for a guarantee for setting up a power station in Lahore had not been put on the agenda of the Committee which decides on requests for such guarantees. Similarly, if METRO were to ask for a guarantee for their Pakistan project, their request would also be put on hold. The case of Effeff Industries had become a "benchmark case" and having it settled "in a very short time would be in your interest," Steffens said.

**SECRET**

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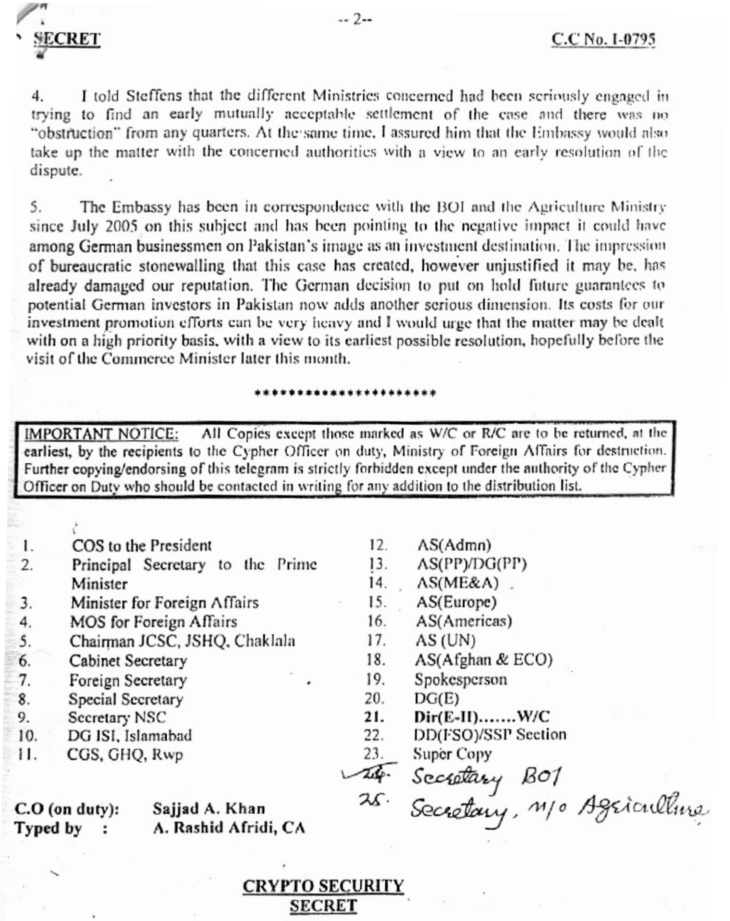

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4. I told Steffens that the different Ministries concerned had been seriously engaged in trying to find an early mutually acceptable settlement of the case and there was no "obstruction" from any quarters. At the same time, I assured him that the Embassy would also take up the matter with the concerned authorities with a view to an early resolution of the dispute.

5. The Embassy has been in correspondence with the BOI and the Agriculture Ministry since July 2005 on this subject and has been pointing to the negative impact it could have among German businessmen on Pakistan's image as an investment destination. The impression of bureaucratic stonewalling that this case has created, however unjustified it may be, has already damaged our reputation. The German decision to put on hold future guarantees to potential German investors in Pakistan now adds another serious dimension. Its costs for our investment promotion efforts can be very heavy and I would urge that the matter may be dealt with on a high priority basis, with a view to its earliest possible resolution, hopefully before the visit of the Commerce Minister later this month.

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The German Government had this matter followed up forcefully with the instructions to their Embassy in Pakistan to attend all the meetings with the Government together with us. It was only after the issue was resolved amicably that the German aid to Pakistan was again resumed. What a pity! The country had an import bill of over One Billion Dollars on account of the edible oil requirements in 1994. In just two years it had been brought down to 600 million dollars in 1996. With very handsome support from the US Government for forty-four millions dollars annually for the next six years, it had all the potentials to take the country towards self-sufficiency in our edible oil import requirements. But how the deliberate mischief of a few and the very powerful lobbies destroyed all the potentials will remain a painful episode. The import bill has now reached over two Billion Dollars. There are some other examples too of how these powerful Mafias, with their vested interests deeply entrenched, will not let any progress be attained. They are the bane of the country. How the mischief of a few destroyed all the potentials in a matter of just a few months? It is a classic case for study and review.

During my visits to Babar's office, I met with a gentleman who was introduced to me as Zalme Khalil Zad. He was an American National, but he and his family originally belonged to Afghanistan from where they had migrated to America when he was only five years of age. Though they were Pushto speaking, but had their roots in the Northern Afghanistan with no linkages to the Southern Areas of the Pakhtoon belt. He gave me his visiting card, which explained that he was working with an American company called Unicol. I had several meetings with him in Babar's office, where I learned that his company was interested in laying a gas pipe line from Turkmenistan to Pakistan through Afghanistan, and onwards to India. He had no contacts with Taliban's, who were in control at Kabul, and was so seeking Babar's help to secure their approval. During those meetings with him he was always suggesting to me that whenever I visit America, I must call him and that he would be too pleased to meet with me there.

It was in August 1996, at the invitation of The American Soybean Association; I went to Washington and called him I was there. He was pleased to get my call, and it suited him as he was also at Washington, and we agreed to meet at the hotel I was staying in the next day. Later in the day, I got a call from John Reagan who told me he had learned about my arrival in America and that he would like to come over to meet with me. He told me he would come to the hotel, but no time was fixed.

The next day at the appointed time, Zalme Khalil Zad gave the call that he had arrived in the lobby and we agreed to meet in my room. We exchanged the pleasantries, and he gave a run down on the progress made on the project. He emphasized that Pakistan's approval to it was very important and more critical to it was the assent by the Taliban's. While we were busy discussing this pipeline, I had a knock at the door. When I opened the door, I saw John Reagan had arrived, so I invited him in. I introduced him to Zalme Khalil Zad and on learning the background of his Company Unicol and the project that they were interested in Pakistan, he got involved in the discussion. He told me that CIA has a policy that no one of their members, after they have finished their assignment in any Country, may revisit it again. After his term in Pakistan, he had been moved to China and was now working in the head office. He told me he cannot come to Pakistan, but he still has interest there, and would within his limitations, do what he could, for it was the message he was giving me. He also extended all his greetings to the mutual friends and wanted me to remember him to them. In particular he was extending his well wishes to General Babar, who was now the Interior Minister, and wished him well in this new sensitive assignment. He told me that his opinion and views were well respected by him and that everyone in the American Government considers him to be an eminent authority on Afghanistan Affairs and his knowledge of Tribal Territories and his contacts there. As the meeting finished, he held the hand of Zalmay Khalil Zad and said that he was taking him along. This was the first introduction of Zalme Khalil Zad to the policy makers in America, who mattered.

With passaging time, I was totally astonished when I learnt that Zalme Khalil Zad had been appointed as the American Ambassador to Afghanistan. To my further disbelief he was transferred as American Ambassador to Iraq and to crown it all he became the American permanent representative to the United Nations. I was left wondering what wisdom and advice he was giving to the American Government on this area so critical to them! John Reagan died, and I had no further contacts with him, but had he been living, I would have liked to ask him the compulsions and the reasons!

As the Interior Minister, Babar was working with a single minded purpose of improving the law and order situation in the Country. General Zia, in his long tenure, had built up Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) and its leader Altaf Hussain, as a counter weight to Bhutto and his party PPP in Sindh. Over the period of time, their activities had assumed menacing proportions. It had become a ruthless organization, which had imposed a Nazi style rigid control, and were whipping the sentiments of the people towards negative politics. It was tearing apart the moral fiber of the society and the life in the areas dominated by Urdu speaking people. They had built a military wing of the party, which was involved in acts of violence and target killing. They also maintained torture cells and used those to further their negative cause.

All these activities had resulted in serious law and order situation; in particular in Karachi, which was once a very peaceful city. Babar had inherited this on his assumption of office as the Interior Minister. He acted and set himself on the path of eradicating this Cancer from the body politics of the Country. He held nothing against the Urdu speaking people of the Country, and in fact held them in high esteem and regarded them as nationalists and loyal citizens. It was the activities of the Party that had wrecked the law and order situation in Karachi, which he embarked to eradicate and control. For this he launched a massive operation in Karachi and true to himself he led this up in front. He would come to Karachi himself and would lead the operation tasked for the day. On one of his visits I too was in Karachi. He was staying at the State Guest House, Qasr-i- Naz and on learning about his presence I went over to see him. When I met him, he gave me some insight of how he had been conducting this operation. He told me that when General Asif Nawaz Janjua was the Corps Commander, Karachi, he had compiled a very detailed report which was based on gathering very extensive intelligence information, on the activities of MQM. This report had all the information of their military cells and so also their torture cells. It had described their exact locations and also who all were manning those. He told me he had decided to eliminate these unlawful cells, and to apprehend the culprits involved in these activities. His earlier operations proved to be a failure. It was so because he would show the target at which the operation was to be conducted before his arrival. When they launched the raid, they would find the place all empty. He realized the information was being leaked out by the police authorities, who Babar would take into confidence before undertaking the raid. He told me that because of that he had now changed his method of working. He now comes to Karachi without even picking the targeted place for that day's operation. It was only after arrival at Karachi that he would pick up the report and pick the target for the day. It invariably was working. Having briefed me, he called the heads of the police force which was to accompany him, picked his target and showed the same to them. Having done that, he bade me farewell and left for the mission of the day. Invariably, he was going to the selected place himself and was leading the operation under his own supervision and guidance. He had told me that his orders were that if anyone surrenders, he must be apprehended peacefully, but if there is resistance then it must be eliminated ruthlessly. These orders had gone well, and he was there to oversee everything and to ensure that they are fully acted and implemented. It was his personal initiative, which had helped in improving the law and order situation in Karachi. As I had said earlier, he had no personal enmity with the Urdu speaking people of Karachi. They also wanted the fear created in their minds to be eliminated.

It is a misnomer to say that Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar created the Taliban in Afghanistan. In fact, they came upon their own strength and exploded in influence and power in a brief span of time. The night that the Taliban took over Kandahar, Babar had earlier in the day brought a group of Diplomats from Pakistan to visit Kandahar and Herat in a C-130 aircraft, to show them that the area is peaceful, and the route to Central Asian Republics is safe both for transit and also for laying the proposed gas pipeline. On return from Herat they all landed at Kandahar Airport, and after seeing off the group of Diplomats, Babar called on the Governor of Kandahar. While he was en route, he noticed some strange movements of some armed personnel. On the return, he was again somewhat alarmed by this growing activity, but dismissed it as nothing special. It was only after his return that the next morning he got the news of the Taliban's uprising in Kandahar. To test this route, Babar sent a convoy of vehicles loaded with merchandise to trade with the Central Asian Countries. As these vehicles arrived in Kandahar, the miscreant's intercepted these vehicles and looted all the goods. It was only a few days later that he got a call from the newly emerging leader of the Taliban's, Mulla Omar, in which he regretted this incident and informed Babar that he had recovered all the goods and put those back on the vehicles and that he was free to send this convey to its desired destination. This was General Babar's first contact with the Taliban Leader. With time they grew. Soon the Taliban extended their writ in the countryside and even captured Kabul. At this stage, General Babar again called Mulla Omar and advised him not to go beyond Kabul as it was likely to engulf the whole of Afghanistan in a civil war. By this time Mullah Omar had begun to respect General Babar's opinion and advice. So he decided to act on that.

Conspiracies against the Government of Benazir Bhutto had been started by President Farooq Leghari since April 1996, and he had a close batch of his old CSP class mates involved in it. This information had been clearly given to Tariq Akbar, son-in-law of Dr Zafar Niazi, by someone directly involved in that group, but for reasons of confidence reposed in him by that person, he is rather reluctant to disclose his name. Also During this period, General Jehangir Karamat had written a letter to Dr Zafar Niazi in which he had informed him he had learned about the conspiracies being hatched against the elected Government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and he wanted him to inform her of this. Dr Niazi handed over this letter to Benazir, but she took it very lightly and did not take this threat very seriously. What is astonishing, why did General Karamat not act on his own to prevent this conspiracy being hatched and promoted right under his nose?

To bring about a harmony and peace in the troubled Afghanistan, Babar undertook several visits to Kabul to meet with Mullah Omar and his team, and also to establish the contacts with the leaders of the Northern Alliance. The Taliban fully cooperated with him and even extended the facility of the use of their helicopters for his visits to meet the leadership of the Northern Alliance. Babar would come back and narrate this experience to us, his close friends. On a lighter vein, he would say that he did not trust the navigational capability of the MI-8 helicopter crew and would go to the cockpit himself and do all the navigation. He would boast his way in that he never lost the direction and invariably reached the correct destination. We were impressed because navigation was not his forte in flying. As a result of these several visits in which he met all the leaders of Afghanistan, including the Taliban and Ahmad Shah Masud, Dostum and others of the Northern Alliance, he had brokered a deal. They all had agreed to make Afghanistan a Confederation. During one of his visits, he had an American accompanying him. He was apparently from CIA and was rather skeptical of all these efforts. But Babar went ahead regardless. A draft agreement had been prepared, and he had this approved by all the parties. It was on November 3, 1996, that a meeting was held at the President's House, which was led by President Farooq Leghari and attended by Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Interior Minister Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar, COAS Jehangir Karamat, Foreign Secretary Najm-ud-Din Sheikh and Director General ISI Lieutenant General Naeem Rana. At that meeting, Babar presented this draft agreement which had been approved by all the parties of Afghanistan, which was discussed and subsequently agreed on. It was hoped that with this breakthrough, a period of stability will ensue in Afghanistan after a prolonged period of unrest. Babar was to proceed to Kabul on November 5, 1996, and get the Draft Agreement signed by all the parties. Strange enough, President Leghari dismissed the Benazir Government on November 4, 1996. According to the information of General Babar, the COAS General Jehangir Karamat was not in the loop in all likelihood. In this particular Coup, it was General Naeem Rana, the ISI chief, who was more active and even the troops came from ISI rather than the usual 111 Brigade. In fact, General Jehangir Karamat is believed to have called the Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto on November 4, 1996, to tell her he was hearing some rumbling sounds and further inquired from the Prime Minister if she would like him to look into the matter. The Prime Minister did not seem to be again concerned and responded in the negative. In the evening the announcement of the dismissal of Benazir Bhutto Government was made on the TV. So General Babar could not proceed to Kabul on November 5, 1996, as planned and agreed. But the strangest part was why President Farooq Leghari did not go ahead with what had been planned and decided only a day earlier? It was promising stability in the area, and some powers did not want that in persuading their National Aims and Objectives. An excellent opportunity was lost, and since then the region is in a tailspin to justify the foreign troops in Afghanistan. After General Zia's act of not signing the agreed solution to which Sirdar Daud had given his approval, this was the second time that during peace was denied to Afghanistan and the area. It could not be another coincident but had to suite the Game Plan of some powers.

## CHAPTER 14

# SECOND TENURE OF NAWAZ SHARIF AND CURSE OF GENERAL MUSHARRAF'S MARTIAL LAW

The second tenure of Nawaz Sharif took an auspicious start. He had a marked supremacy in the Parliament. This gave him an ideal opportunity to do the reforms and bring about good governance in the country, but he frittered this opportunity away. He politicized the entire bureaucratic system, vested interests prevailed, and the interests of his family and those of his party members remained close to him and kept above the interests of the Country. He worked for a pliant judiciary. He was also keen to bring the Army Higher Command close under his control. He got a track of the then COAS, General Jehangir Karamat's account in Switzerland, and used that to blackmail him. He considered it prudent to resign. At this stage, the choice of a new COAS came up. I was again keen on having a truly professional soldier in command of this great Army. My friend Lieutenant General (Retd) Safdar Butt was close to Nawaz Sharif and supposed to be in his kitchen cabinet. Their relationship had grown from the days when Safdar was Chairman WAPDA, and Nawaz Sharif was the Finance Minister in the Punjab Cabinet of Governor, Lieutenant General (Retd) Jilani. I stressed upon Safdar that it was high time that we have a truly professional and competent soldier in Command of the Army. I tried to rectify it in the past and failed. Unfortunately, in the Army, the promotion to the top rank is not given sufficient importance to this aspect of his performance and his capability. I also told him that the Country has had two wars and that War performance should become the most important factor and given the utmost priority. He agreed with me. The name of Lieutenant-General Ali Kuli stood out. He was the senior most and had seen extensive combat in East Pakistan where he was actively involved in many heliborne operations. He readily agreed to this choice. Later, he mentioned this to Nawaz Sharif and convinced him to appoint him as the next Army Chief. Lieutenant General Pervaiz Musharraf, who was also in the running, became very active and created his own lobby. He developed close contacts with Lieutenant General (Retd) Iftikhar Ali, elder brother of Chaudhry Nisar Ali, who was the Defence Secretary at that time. He used these contacts to have a meeting with Nawaz Sharif. It is believed to have been held at Lahore at the residence of Mumtaz the owner of Fazal Din Chemists. What was discussed and what promises were made I have no precise knowledge, but evidently Nawaz Sharif changed his earlier decision and decided to promote Lieutenant General Parvez Musharraf as the next Army Chief? To meet the Prime Minister secretly over the head of his own COAS surely shows a lack of character quality, for which he should have been Court Martialled. Lucky that he survived and became the Army Chief. Yet again the Army lost the opportunity to have a true professional and competent soldier as its head. Of course, Nawaz Sharif must be now cursing his choice. In fact, in a close circle of my friends, a joke started going around that anyone whose name that I recommend for COAS is sure not to be selected for that assignment. I tried to make sincere suggestions, but those in power had their own angles and purpose to grind.

With General Parvaiz Musharraf as COAS and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the helm of the affairs in the country, there was no vision in the minds of the policy makers and events kept drifting. In this period, nothing much of significance took place except the sordid plan of attack at Kargil. General Musharraf had earlier been snubbed by the Benazir Government, and the permission to execute this attack was denied. But he now got the naïve mind of Nawaz Sharif who perhaps without understanding the implications of this and its likely repercussions gave the quiet nod for it. Enough has already been written on this, and I feel there is no need to dilate on that. I would just say that it was an irrational act by both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the unprofessional COAS. Lieutenant General (Retd) Malik Abdul Majid was our instructor, the First PMA Long Course, the true pioneers of the Academy. We had a lot of respect for him and expected that with his military knowledge, experience and familiarity with the area, he could have prevailed on the impressionable and naïve mind of Nawaz Sharif to avoid this disaster. But it seems he failed to do so. Another event worth mentioning is the befitting reply to the Indian adventure of going Nuclear. It is to the credit of Nawaz Sharif that he took the immediate decision of giving a proper response by approving the tests of our own weapons system. Pakistan had gained the technology of the Nuclear Bomb as way back as 1985 when it had carried out its cold test. But the actual blasts came in 1998. This restored the strategic military balance in the region. Many claims may be made for the credit to this successful accomplishment, but indisputably the sole recognition is because of the role and part played by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. He laid down his life for this cause! The others whose contribution is to be recognised are Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan and Mr Munir Ahmad Khan, who headed the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission mostly, and for this program had a significant role in its completion. There developed an unfortunate rivalry between Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan and Munir Ahmad. I do not want to indulge in any frivolous details of it. Munir was my friend from the days of Government College, and we shared many secrets of this program. At the time of the explosion, I had written an article to explain some details of the background and the way this brilliant success was achieved. It was published in The Nation. In brief, what I had tried to bring out is as follows:-

Without going into all those details, I will sum up the activities which finally culminated in the successfully completion of this most ambitious task. As I said earlier, Munir Ahmad I knew from my days of Government College Lahore. He was a friend and classmate of my elder brother, who was a class senior to me in college and thus became my friend too. His family was also well known to our family and he and I kept close contacts with each other. The whole idea of developing the Nuclear Program was started by Dr Abdus Salam and Mr Munir Ahmad Khan. It was at a meeting in Europe with Mr Bhutto, that the two impressed on him that the only way to correct the Military imbalance in the region is to go Nuclear. Mr Bhutto was in full agreement with this. As a follow up, he arranged a meeting for Munir Ahmad with General Ayub Khan, while he was staying in Dorchester Hotel, London. At this meeting, Ayub Khan also had Dr Usmani, the Chairman of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), present. Munir gave all the reasoning why Pakistan should have the nuclear capability. But it did not seem to impress him; perhaps he was too concerned about the likely reaction of the world or more particularly the big powers. Ayub Khan even made an absurd remark, that if the need be this could be purchased off the shelf. Bhutto was also waiting in the Dorchester Hotel for the results of the meeting. When Munir Khan told him about the negative response, he too was very disappointed. He told Munir that they have no option but to wait for another appropriate opportunity.

When Bhutto assumed powers as the President of Pakistan, he called a meeting at Multan, and also summoned Munir Ahmad Khan for this. At this, he told Munir to take over as Chairman of PAEC, and work on the plan that he had earlier discussed with him. He gave him a free hand and promised all the funds needed. On the assumption of his new office; he made all the plans and embarked on the process of his dream of acquiring Nuclear Technology for the Bomb. He was very secretive. To divert the attention of the world, he purposely advised Mr Bhutto to sign a Nuclear Re-Processing Plant deal with France. This was openly announced in a press conference after the signing of the Agreement in Paris. After this deal in France he came over to Germany, and I along with my brother met him. He in all confidence told us that it was only a ploy, and that his route to the bomb was the enrichment process. To make all the purchases, he picked on Germany as the place, and on mutual consultations with my brother, he selected on their class fellow Ikram as the choice to handle this sensitive assignment. Ikram, who was working at POF Wah, was transferred to PAEC and posted to Germany in the garb of a diplomatic assignment. He proved to be an excellent choice. He organized his office in a remote village area, which was an inconspicuous place, and planned all his purchases very discreetly. Millions of Dollars were placed at his disposal and there were no questions asked. Admirably, he proved equal to the task and lived up to the confidence placed in him. Whenever, he would have his consignment of purchases ready, he would call Munir and a C-130 would arrive to pick those up. In doing all this no suspicions arose. His integrity was such that when he retired, all he could afford was a small flat in Islamabad and is living there. He was many of the unsung heroes.

In the making of the bomb, there were many stages. Munir as Chairman PAEC, had 28 different factories working under him. He himself was not a Nuclear Scientist, but he told me that Dr Usmani, had earlier created an excellent team of scientists, and he further built up on that. They all molded into a very harmonious and competent set up. The entire process involved first the finding of local deposits of Uranium, its extraction and then its refinement to a required very high degree. After that, this mass was turned into Liquid/ Gaseous state. This was then sent to the enrichment plant at Kahuta for its final enrichment to the degree that was required. The enriched Uranium would again go back to PAEC Laboratories, where it was brought back into the state of solid mass. During this transition there was the great danger of the pilferage of this sensitive material, and elaborate safety checks were made to protect this. The solid mass was then given the shape of the bomb, and finally a trigger mechanism was required for its explosion.

Except for the enrichment, all other work was done under the control and guidance of PAEC. For the extraction of uranium deposits, Munir first picked the area of Landi Kotal and asked me for help. I requested Babar, who was based at Peshawar, and he had the total area cordoned. When the teams of PAEC arrived in the area, they realized that these deposits were right near the Durand Line. Munir rejected this sight as it would attract International attention. He then located new deposits near D.I. Khan, and sought my help again. I suggested to him the name of Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Ghulam Safdar Butt, who was Director General at Frontier Works Organization (FWO) and he and his organization did an excellent job.

For the enrichment process, the sight chosen by Munir Khan was Kahuta. While all this was going on, Dr Abdul Qadir Khan wrote a letter to Mr Bhutto offering his help and assistance, and he passed it on to Munir Khan. He was called to Pakistan and when he met Munir Khan; he was most impressed by his photogenic memory. He drew all the drawings of the Centrifuge from his memory. Munir advised him to continue working at his place and try to get all the detailed drawings. With this help, Munir Khan started the work on Kahuta plant and also setting up a centrifuge at Chaklala airport area. For this he again asked me for a suitable name, and I recommended Brigadier (Later Lieutenant General) Zahid Ali Akbar. The work on enrichment plant thus started. Later, when Dr A.Q. Khan had copied all the detailed drawings, he arrived back in Pakistan. He was entrusted with the full responsibility of handling the entire task of enrichment of uranium. But before he arrived, the first enrichment plant at Chaklala had already started functioning; though it was not performing at the desired levels of efficiency. After Dr A.Q. Khan took over the Kahuta facilities, the full work on it started, and all credit is only because of him for the successful completion of this entire process. It was one of the most difficult parts of the programme, and he had this task accomplished. At this stage some differences developed between Munir Ahmad Khan and Dr A.Q. Khan, but I would not like to dwell on that. Mr Bhutto was getting impatient with the speed of the whole programme and wanted this to be speeded up, so he tasked Major General Imtiaz, his Military Secretary, to oversee this, and bring about better co-ordination between the work of PAEC under Munir Khan and the Kahuta Laboratories under Dr A.Q.Khan.

In the entire work undertaken, two main problems emerged. One was the trigger mechanism of the bomb, and the other was the motors of the centrifuges which were burning at the high speeds at which they were required to run. To solve these, for the trigger mechanism he requested Benazir for help, and for the motors he deputed his old college colleague, Colonel (Retd) Bashir Ahmad. On a trip to China, Benazir got the help of the Chinese friends to assist in the functioning of the trigger mechanism. For the problem of the burning of the motors of the centrifuges at the high speeds that they were required to run, Colonel (Retd) Bashir Ahmad went to Europe and located the original designer and the manufacturer of these motors. He induced him to come to Pakistan and help. This he did, and the problem was overcome and the bottleneck was removed.

Finally, the Bomb was ready in 1985, and was cold tested. For the testing of the explosion, Munir Ahmad had selected the area of Chagai

Mountains in Baluchistan, and had all the tunneling work done. Though he was satisfied with the work, but to prevent any remote possibility of the leakage, he had this tested by a Chinese team. Thus all was ready, and every one waited for the suitable occasion and the opportunity to carry out the test of its explosion. It came in 1998, when the Indians boastfully carried out their Explosion, Nawaz Sharif, after some reluctance, gave the approval and should take the credit to that extent and not to claim any further laurels.

For the actual testing of the bomb, the responsibility was given specifically to Samar Mubarikmand and his team. When the successful tests were done, which stunned the entire world and in particular the Indians, Dr Samar Mubarikmand offered his prayers at the sight to thank the Almighty Allah for the successful accomplishment of this arduous task. The first person he called was Munir Ahmad Khan; and he was delighted to give him the good news and congratulated him for this. It was a wonderful tribute to him. But as Munir always maintained that it was all a team work. So if any glory is due, it is to that team and to no one individual.

Beyond the expectations and hopes of Nawaz Sharif, General Musharraf staged his military coup in 1999. All plans had been made by him earlier to his visit to Sri Lanka. The drama of the hijacking of the aircraft on his return was not that serious an incident to endanger his life and those of the other passengers. It was only an excuse coined. This was only a reaction of the Military Authorities to the orders of Nawaz Sharif about dismissing General Musharraf and appointing General Zia-ud- din as his successor. General Musharraf along with his wife, had earlier called on Admiral Fasih Bokhari at his house and had tried to take him in confidence and to win over his support. But the Admiral refused and told him he would not be any part of it. Nevertheless, General Musharraf went through his plans and deposed the elected Prime Minister. I had developed an intense dislike for any military adventurers, as I had understood that Martial Laws had not sought any solutions and instead had left many problems in their wake. But it seems that I did not vigorously oppose this Coup of General Musharraf initially. I have no clear recollections and reasons for it, but some friends and even my wife claimed that I was supportive of it. I must believe them, but in hindsight, I cannot justify this reaction of mine. I am also lost for reasons. The only justification I may find is that perhaps I rated Nawaz Sharif's style and way of governance more destructive! A day after the Martial Law was declared by General Musharraf, I got a call from Brigadier (Retd) Niaz, while I was at Kabirwala and he told me, “Sir, as per your desire, Dr Zafar Altaf is coming back as Secretary Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock.” On my query, he wasn’t forthcoming with any details, but when I met him on my return to Rawalpindi, he explained that all this happened while General Musharraf was at his place a day before his coup. He asked Niaz for a suitable name to be posted as the new incumbent of the important Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock. When the name of Dr Zafar Altaf was suggested to him, he readily agreed to it and soon after taking over as the President he ordered his posting. I was happy that at least some saner suggestion had prevailed on his mind and hoped the Agriculture will get due recognition and support.

On taking over his assignment for the third time, he called General Musharraf requesting him for a meeting. They had a one-to-one meeting at GHQ, Rawalpindi, in which Dr Zafar Altaf briefed him and told him how some powerful Mafia’s in the Country had sabotaged some of his previous programs during his previous two tenures in this post. To provide continuity and to lay down a long term Agricultural development plan, he requested for a detailed presentation to him in which he would seek his decisions and once they are approved, he would request that he be given a free hand to implement those. On this General Musharraf remarked, “You have many enemies and detractors! But you equally have powerful friends.” Zafar Altaf replied that he knows his enemies well, and that they may all be also invited to attend the briefing that he planned to make. General Musharraf agreed with this suggestion, and when the meeting was held, it was very widely represented. Zafar Altaf made a very comprehensive and a detailed presentation of the long term agricultural growth plan that he had envisaged and planned. Throughout the meeting there was hardly any query, and none of those detractors of Zafar Altaf, even in their infinite wisdom, had any question to raise. This made the process of approval of all his proposals and suggestions easy, and the meeting ended, giving a full confirmation and approval of all his plans. He quickly compiled the minutes of the meeting and had those sent to the President’s Secretariat the next day for his signature. PM Shaukat Aziz and some of his other powerful detractors, realizing that he had got a blanket approval of all his proposals, became active and through back door efforts started to plan sabotaging this. The next day, instead of signing the minutes sent to him, General Musharraf called Zafar Altaf and told him he has been advised that these have a lot of financial implications and may best be sent to ECC for their discussions and approval. The mischief was truly at work, and instead of having any sound alternative proposals to offer, they were all working to derail the plan of Agricultural

Growth as presented by Dr Zafar Altaf. On this suggestion, Dr Zafar Altaf remarked that he is very familiar with the working of the ECC, and he knows well that there was hardly anything that gets approved there and that is why he had asked for this presentation to him with direct decisions at that level. The naïve mind of General Musharraf agreed with this and asked for another presentation. When the meeting was held, again the whole presentation was made and none attending that had any suggestions to make or questions to ask. None could match the experience and knowledge of Zafar Altaf, and thus again preferred to remain silent lest they are exposed. This time even the minutes sent were approved, and now these critics were briefing General Musharraf on a different line and track. They were strongly advising him that Zafar Altaf is a headstrong man and that he does not listen to anyone else. And now they further warned General Musharraf, that he had already started flouting even his instructions and orders. What instances they coined, one is not aware of it, but the gullible Musharraf, removed him from his job without even making any inquiry or asking for his explanation!

Perhaps realizing that he had not been fair to him, he called Zafar Altaf and told him he was recommending his name for the position of Chairman at the important international organization of IFAD, based at Rome. When Zafar Altaf was called to Rome, he was assigned Poverty Alleviation, on which he was required to speak. Four other names from some other Countries so recommended were also given different subjects to speak on. After all the presentations had been made, the United States of America's ambassador assigned to Rome, walked up to Zafar Altaf and told him he was most impressed by his presentation and asked him to come to the Embassy the next day for a meeting with him. When they met, the Ambassador was again full of praise the way he had given his discourse on the subject. He also told him that being the biggest donors to this organization they have enough votes to have him nominated as the Chairman, and he would very much like to do that, but he is hearing some rumbling rumours that his name is being withdrawn by the Pakistan Government.

Zafar Altaf was not aware of any such move, so had to express his ignorance. The next day the news of the withdrawal of his name was confirmed, and Zafar Altaf sat there marveling at the absurdities of the decision making of this ignorant and imbecile mind!

By removing him from the scene of Agriculture, both at home and also at the international level, General Musharraf had exposed himself about the lack of his mental grasp in running the affairs of the State.

This and many other examples adequately amplify the naivety and blusterous manner in which he was handling his decision making at that level. What damage did he cause to this Country in the process? Is most reprehensible for everyone to think and imagine! But still he has the temerity to harmoniously be gloating about his self-presumed triumphs and achievements!

But coming back to Zafar Altaf, he stood tall and was an excellent example of a man and an administrator. When Asif Ali Zardari became the President, he again brought him back as the Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), again his third tenure at that job. But like all his other tenures in the past, except the one under Benazir, he was again marginalized and could not function. How he was later under the rule of Nawaz Sharif, victimized by one Federal Minister in connivance with the Punjab Government, in his capacity as Chairman Hala Milk project, entrusted to him by Ghulam Ishaq Khan, is again a very sordid and morbid story of the greed and personal interests of this Mafia at work? Despite the stay order that they had from the Punjab High Court, and in total disregard of that and in violation of that, how this project was taken over and the precious land allotted to make college in the father's name of the person, is a separate story that I am referring to illustrate how he was harassed and victimized! His nonbailable warrants of arrest were issued, but yet he defied all those pressures and did not yield. Unfortunately, while still defiantly struggling against this gang of criminals, he passed away last year. But what he has left in the wake of this unfinished struggle is the hallmark of the man that he was, and his tremendous contributions to this Country despite all the obstructions that were imposed on him. He stands out as the most admirable and respected person of this class of CSP officers and friends, who are all fast being obscured and phased out.

After our retirement from the Army, our course, First PMA Long course, has been regularly holding its annual reunion, which falls on 4th February every year; the date of our graduation in 1950. These get together kept the spirit of the Course alive. Because of kind courtesy of Safdar Butt, some of these were outdoor functions, and those held at Tarbela Dam were noteworthy and carry very fond memories. These would bring back the recollections of the past and allow the opportunity to our wives and the families to meet. On the occasion of one of those, we went to Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, and held the function there. The Commandant, Major General (Later Lieutenant General) Ghulam Muhammad played host to us and conducted us around in the Academy and later hosted Lunch for us in the officer's mess. We were all reminded of our days spent at Kakul and all the past remembrances flashed back in our minds.

The time was now drawing close to the Golden Jubilee of our Graduation from the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. It was falling on 4th February 2000, but the preparations for this had to be made well ahead of time. The most significant aspect was that the authorities at PMA, Kakul and the General Headquarters, Rawalpindi, both duly recognized our Course, the First PMA Long Course, to be the true Pioneers of the Pakistan Military Academy, and had given us the unique honour and privilege to set up a monument duly commemorating the occasion. We had to make the preparations for that. In the raising of this monument, it was Safdar Butt who played the most active role. He arranged the donations of the funds through his personal efforts. In the monument's designing, its completion at 502 Workshop and its erection at the site so chosen at PMA, Lieutenant General (Retd) M. Saadat Ali and Major General (Retd) Azhar Ali Syed also played a major role. Through the personal contribution of their time and all necessary supervision and coordination of effort that it needed, setting up this monument was successfully accomplished and was ready for the formal inauguration ceremony on 4th February 2000. The function got off to a very smooth start and 23 of our course mates arrived at PMA with their families. The Nanda Bus service was organized and this time Azhar Ali Syed chipped in to help and remember the old traditional efforts of Mahmud Qazi. The Commandant PMA wanted very much to receive us himself, but he was called to GHQ for some important meeting. In his absence the Deputy Commandant, Brigadier Waseem Ahmad Ashraf, admirably played host to us. It was a simple ceremony but had all the trappings of grace, pageantry, solemnity and grandeur which were befitting the occasion.

After the inauguration ceremony was over, we were all conducted on a round of visit to the PMA. The sight of old barracks and classrooms brought back the memories of the days spent here in our early career, Later we visited the Museum which is an excellent addition to the imposing new buildings and structures that cover the skylines of PMA as it looks to-day; a big contrast from our times! This important day and occasion was rounded off by a lunch hosted at the officer's Mess PMA Kakul. The thoughts that prevailed were to imagine who all will be privileged to attend the Diamond Jubilee function which would fall on 4th February 2010.

It was in May 2001 that Major General N.K. Babar, who was now living a retired life in Peshawar, got a call from the American under Secretary for South Asia. The message was that he was coming on a visit to Pakistan and that he would like to have a meeting with him at Peshawar. The Americans had since the time of the Russian interference in Afghanistan got to recognize General Babar's vision, wisdom and understanding of the conditions obtaining in Afghanistan. They had frequently sought his advice and judgment on this. It was for this reason that they again contacted him. General Babar immediately sensed the reason. He concluded that they wanted to discuss not only the general situation in Afghanistan but the distinct possibility of apprehending Osama Bin Laden, who was emerging as their target. With this thought, General Babar called Mr Mutawakkul the Foreign Minister of Afghanistan and requested him to come over to Peshawar for a meeting with him. Since he had close relationships with the Taliban, he obliged and came over to Peshawar to see General Babar. In the meeting, Babar asked the Afghan Foreign Minister the direct question about Osama Bin Laden and why they were trying to shield him. He also warned him that if they continue to harbour him in Afghanistan, the Americans were likely to react and may cause immense harm and damage to them through the use of massive power and armed might. Mr Muttawakkul immediately called Mullah Omar on his mobile and gave him this message of Babar. Mullah Omar himself came on the line to talk to Babar. He told him he had no interest in giving shelter and protection to Osama Bin Laden. He also said that he was willing to hand over Osama bin Laden to any neutral Islamic Country but on two conditions. The first was a guarantee that he would get a fair trial and two that at the court which may try him; one judge should be from Afghanistan. After a brief discussion, he came to a figure of five judges who should try him and sit on the bench. He also informed General Babar that Osama Bin Laden never came as a guest of Mullah Omar. Instead, he was invited by Professor Rabbani, who was the then President of Afghanistan. His rather searching question was in regard to the identity of the party who provided the C-130 that brought him from Sudan to Afghanistan? Having reached this understanding with Mullah Omar, General Babar presented the same to the American under Secretary for South Asia when he came to see him at Peshawar. To Babar's utter surprise, he was astonished at the answer given to him for his proposal. He was asked as to what guarantee can he give that he would be punished. To this Babar had a very strong reaction and said that the American Government had not even indicted Osama Bin Laden, so by what logic and reason could they want the guarantee that he would be punished. The meeting ended at that, but in reflection, it brought out that the Americans were not interested in bringing stability in this region and that the continued trouble and chaos suited their plans and design. As on two previous occasions that I have already mentioned, they too had deliberately, but with activities behind the scenes, wrecked all the chances of peace and stability in the region. I suppose the purpose was to keep the region on the boil. It suited them, and perhaps it had to be our fate!

Coming back to the event of General Musharraf's staging of coup, I have already given my immediate reaction. Now in afterthought, it did not take me long to come openly against this adventurism. It was in 2003, that I worked actively against it by calling a meeting of some close group of friends and associates who had the good of the Country at heart and were sincere in their outlook. I place below the letter I wrote:-

*29, Westridge-1,*
*Rawalpindi*
*Tel:-5470669 19 April 2003*

*My Dear*

*Pakistan has a history that our leaders remain imperiously indifferent to the impending crisis. We realize its gravity when the events have over-taken us.*

*The International events have been casting the shadows on Pakistan's horizons for the last two years. These shadows seem to lengthen with every passing day. The message they bring in their wake seems to have serious connotations and far-reaching implications for our country. It is imperative that every patriotic, sincere, and loyal citizen of Pakistan, who has the love of the country at heart, should agitate his mind and grasp the manifestations of the implicit threat that these International Power Games hold for us. A consensus needs to be devolved urgently what we need to do to prepare ourselves, and to brace up to meet these challenges.*

*To hold in-depth open discussions of all these serious repercussions that these grave developments imply for us, a meeting of a small group is being proposed to be held. The names are being picked up through informal consultations with a wide cross section of the society. Later, any other suitably qualified and eminent persons could be added, if sodesired.*

*The first proposed meeting is being held on 30, April 2003, at 10.00 Hrs at 29, Westridge- 1, Rawalpindi. The names of the participants being requested to attend the meeting are attached. A confirmation will be much appreciated.*

*Thanks*
*Yours Sincerely*
*Brig (Retd) M.M.Mahmud*

I had sent this letter to some close friends (23), and out of those 19 attended. We deliberated at length and in conclusion we decided to write a letter to General Musharraf, asking for a meeting to air our concerns. It was also concluded that if he agrees it would be fine, or else we should be prepared to launch a movement against him. Unfortunately, we could not implement these decisions. This was so because Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Zulfikar Ali Khan and Major General (Retd) Rao Farman Ali, who were the principal movers of these, died and my wife, unfortunately, developed cancer. But my concern remained active. It was in 2007 when the lawyers movement started, that along with some friends, I organised the Pakistan Ex- Servicemen Association to agitate to support it. Our efforts hurt the false pride and ego of this megalomaniac military dictator. It also helped in conveying a message to top military Brass. This can be best described by an article published by an American Journalist Carlotta Gall. The same she sent in an e-mail, addressed to Lieutenant General (Retd) Ali Kuli Khan. I place that below to make your own evaluation:-

--- On Sun, 4/4/10, Carlotta Gall wrote From: Subject: Article Carlotta Gall quoting carlottagall@gmail. com The To:genali_KuliKhan@yahoo. com

Date: Sunday, April4, 2010, 10:56AMhttp://www. nytimes. com/2008/02/06world/ asia/ 06pakistan.html? r=1&scp=11&sq=ali%20 kuli%20khan&st=cse

February 6, 2008

Military Retirees Demand Musharraf's Resignation By CARLOTTA GALL and SALMAN MASOOD

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan — several hundred retired generals, admirals and servicemen gathered Tuesday for the third time in two weeks in this military town and demanded the resignation of President Pervez Musharraf.

They had assembled for a seminar, but in an unprecedented public protest, a retired army chief, several retired generals and dozens of former servicemen came out onto the main road chanting and shouting against Mr Musharraf.

Just two weeks after they first assembled on January 22nd and wrote a resolution calling on Mr Musharraf to resign, the retired officers movement is starting to build momentum and appears poised to take over where the lawyer's movement, with its main leaders under house arrest, has stalled.

The campaign was also to warn the government not to try to interfere in the parliamentary elections on Feburary, 18th. The retired officers met for a seminar about Kashmir, the territory that Pakistan and India claim, organised by Pakistan Ex-Servicemen's Society, which cares for the welfare of retired military personnel, in a hotel near the Army General Headquarters. The speeches soon turned political, taking aim at Mr Musharraf, blaming him for abandoning Kashmir, stifling an independent judiciary and perpetuating his one-man rule.

He has messed things up; look at law and order, said Lieutenant General Jamshed Gulzar Kiani, a retiree who was the corps commander of Rawalpindi, one of the most important posts in the army, under Mr Musharraf when he was commanding general of the armed forces.

The rash of suicide bombings and the fighting raging in two of Pakistan"s four provinces were the main concerns the former generals raised.

Mr Kiani said that Mr Musharraf gave an elaborate seven-point order of action when he seized power in 1999, but that after eight years he had not delivered on any of them.

Where is the interprovincial harmony? He asked. Where is law and order? Even the economy is going down with escalating food prices.The net result of the eight-year rule is a complete mess-up of the country.

Another former general, Ali Kuli Khan, which was passed over for the top army job when Mr Musharraf was appointed to it in 1998, expressed his frustration with a cricket term. We are here to bring the lesson home that you have had enough of an innings, he said, and unless you back off it will not be possible for things to calm down.

The outbursts, by traditionally loyal and discreet men of the armed forces, represent yet another sign of the growing resentment in Pakistan against Mr Musharraf, whose popularity has plunged since last March, when he dismissed the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry.

The disaffection has grown sharply since Nov. 3, when Mr Musharraf imposed martial law to see through his own election to another presidential term and since the Dec, 27 assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the opposition leader and former prime minister, as she campaigned.

Last month the former servicemen issued a statement urging Mr Musharraf to resign and hand over power to Mr Chaudhry, who has been under house arrest since Nov. 3.

Mr Musharraf, who was in Europe at the time, attacked his detractors. “They are insignificant personalities.” The Financial Times quoted him as saying in an interview at the Davos World Economic Forum. “Most of them are ones who served under me, and I kicked them out.”

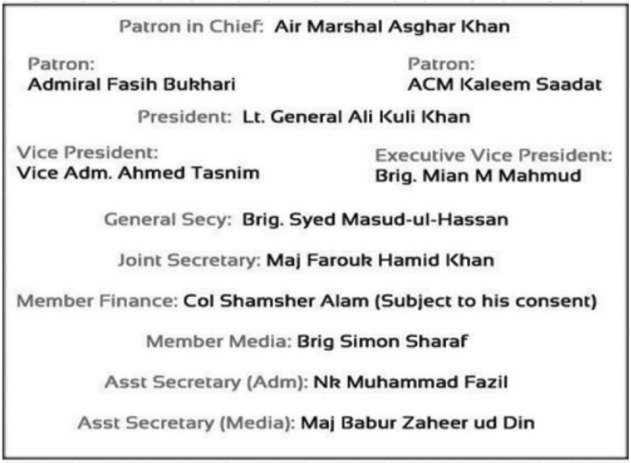
Most of the retired officers at the meeting dismissed his remarks by saying that they considered him a junior officer. Mr Kiani, who had served under General Musharraf, said the ex-servicemen supporting the movement were now far more than the original 100 who signed a statement last month calling for him to step down.

The generals movement is important because Mr Musharraf is more likely to listen to his peers, several at the meeting said.

“This development and their involvement are unprecedented,” said Roedad Khan, a retired senior bureaucrat who was a guest speaker at the seminar. “ This is bound to change the course of events, and very soon.” As he arrived, he was welcomed by one of the organisers, who exclaimed that the servicemen wanted to draw him in.

This sudden demonstration of the Veterans condemning General Musharraf, rattled him and he lost all sense of balance of mind. In a fit of frenzy, at a hurried press conference that he held at Davos, he termed these highly respectable Senior Officers as, “They are insignificant personalities. They are spent cartridges. I kicked them out of the Service. This imbecile hardly realized that most of those standing against him were much senior to him; some had been the Chief’s of various services, and in the way of their bravery and gallantry three heroe’s stood holding the award of SJ & Bar. In comparison, he hardly had anything to show for himself, except for the absurd waving of his close fisted hand as a commando, having no record of significance. He was perhaps licking their boots when they were in the Service.

For this agitation against General Musharraf, we worked in close coordination together with Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Society (PESS). This was originally set up by Major General (Retd) Qamar Ali Mirza, to essentially promote the welfare of the retired personnel of the three Armed Forces. Their Memorandum was also oriented towards that. But we at the Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Association were more directly focusing on the major challenges facing the Country, both internally and externally. For us to put our own house in order was a matter of prior concern, and the upholding of the Constitution was the primary goal that we were pursuing. But still the welfare of collective problems of Ex-Servicemen was getting its due attention. We were not oblivious to it, but felt that the individual problems of some 2.5 Million Ex- Servicemen were of such magnitude that we did not have the resources to handle these, and also our age factor did not allow us the energy to go to every remote part of the Country to provide the help. For solving these, we felt that we needed our Organization to go done to the grass route level, where these can be suitably addressed. But since the movement was against General Musharraf, we wanted that only one organization should represent the community of Ex-Servicemen, rather than have the confusion of two parallel bodies following up this struggle. After the death of Major General (Retd) Qamar Ali Mirza, Lieutenant General (Retd) Faiz Ali Chistie had been elected as the President of PESS. They had a strange clause in their Memorandum that a very restricted franchise was choosing the President on behalf of thousands of members. We did not approve of this and suggested that the General Body Meeting by the majority should vote and elect its President. As we could not reach any consensus on that, we kept functioning as two separate bodies.


Patron in Chief: **Air Marshal Asghar Khan**

Patron:
**Admiral Fasih Bukhari**

Patron:
**ACM Kaleem Saadat**

President: **Lt. General Ali Kuli Khan**

Vice President:
**Vice Adm. Ahmed Tasnim**

Executive Vice President:
**Brig. Mian M Mahmud**

General Secy: **Brig. Syed Masud-ul-Hassan**

Joint Secretary: **Maj Farouk Hamid Khan**

Member Finance: **Col Shamsher Alam (Subject to his consent)**

Member Media: **Brig Simon Sharaf**

Asst Secretary (Adm): **Nk Muhammad Fazil**

Asst Secretary (Media): **Maj Babur Zaheer ud Din**

For this bigger cause of the struggle against the military dictator, we at PESA approached Air Marshal (Retd) M.Asghar Khan and Air Marshal (Retd) Nur Khan to lead us. They were reluctant, as the name of Lieutenant General (Retd) Chistie was also involved. I went to both of them and requested for their kindly agreeing to come and preside over the meetings. This they did despite their reservations, and we all were most grateful to them for this graceful gesture of lending their name to this movement against Musharraf. They attended all the earlier meetings, but because of their age, they could not attend the outdoor protests. They honoured us and we will always remember this with gratitude.

Later, Lieutenant General (Retd) Faiz Ali Chistie decided to step down from the office of the President of PESS. At that stage Lieutenant General (Retd) Hamid Gul approached us for merger. But their system of elections remained the main bottleneck. After his death, again the efforts are afoot to have one body represent the veterans. We hope that we can succeed.

We at PESA are having our regular meetings of the Executive Council and even the General Body, whenever, so required. The elections to the Executive Council are also held regularly according to our Memorandum, We deliberate on all important issues which need to be addressed and give our press statements, which are receiving good coverage. We are making all the efforts that we can to solve some collective problems of the ExServicemen. Also, we are in touch with other representative bodies and think tanks to bring about a broader consensus. We have carried some studies and written comprehensive reports. We have made presentations to some political parties in the Country, emphasizing the need and our recommendations to handle this critical situation. We maintain that the foremost requirement is to put our own house in order. It is the key to our survival against the most challenging internal and external threats. There is the need to develop collective wisdom. The Country is passing through a most critical period of its history. We all have to unite and rise against all threats. In all the efforts I made to further the cause of PESA and in all deliberations to plan and review our policies and activities, my wife Omera Mahmud despite her serious sickness, fully supported me and encouraged me to remain committed to this cause. She even would attend some of our meetings and this was a source of great inspiration to me and even some members. We will always remember her for this gesture and pray for her heavenly abode.

PESA have also undertaken a lot of relief work in connection with the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP's), of initially the Swat and Malakand Areas, and subsequently the North Waziristan. Also during the floods of end July 2010, a lot of help was provided to the people of the affected areas. We are still in touch with most of those that we worked with and are continuing any help which is possible within our resources. Dr Zafar Altaf, who was Chairman PARC, extended a lot of help and made our contribution worthy of a lot of appreciation and praise. We are grateful to him. Some members of PESA had suggested that the name Ex-Servicemen is not suitable. Most Countries refer to them as Veterans. At a General Body Meeting, this was discussed and with the full consensus of all, it was renamed as Veterans of Pakistan (VOP).

Pakistan Ex-Servicemen Association Result of Elections held on 3 May 2014

As I mentioned earlier, Americans had always shown a lot of respect for Babar's Judgment and assessment of the situation in Afghanistan. I too felt that he was one person who was very knowledgeable about the affairs of Afghanistan, always had his hand on the pulse on the affairs of the country and had excellent contacts with both the Taliban's and the leadership of the Northern Alliance. Equally, in our own area of FATA, he had done a lot of development work and had excellent contacts and relationship with the Tribal Malik's. I used to mention this always, whenever; I had the opportunity to meet with higher Army Command. It was only a few years ago, at the funeral of one our course mates, Lieutenant General (Retd) Ahmad Jamal, that I ran into General (Retd) Aslam Baig Mirza. He took the opportunity to mention to me,

"Sir, you keep telling me about the knowledge and experience of General Babar about FATA and the Tribal Maliks. I must tell you that his wisdom and understanding of Tribal Areas is nowhere near that of Colonel Imam who is the genuine expert. He has gone to North Waziristan along with Squadron Leader Khalid Khawaja to meet with the Taliban's and to seek reconciliation with them. You will now know as to who the real expert is." I had not even heard of the name of Colonel Imam and could not make any comments. He seemed to take a great deal of credit for this initiative. The answer came soon when they were both apprehended by Taliban's and were shot. I was amazed as to how General (Retd) Aslam Beg Mirza, now abnegates that he had encouraged and suggested it to them to undertake this visit. General Babar later told me that Colonel Imam had some contacts in Kandahar with the Taliban's, where he was posted. But he had no links and contacts with Taliban's in our Tribal Areas. In fact, he would often come to meet Babar and seek his advice and guidance. I have been always wondering as to why people, who held such high ranks, cannot have the courage to own and accept the truth. The protracted American fighting in Afghanistan against the Taliban's, could not subdue them and even despite their surge of troop strength, only a stalemate ensued. It forced President Obama, to order withdrawal of the American and the Allied troops from Afghanistan, leaving only a small contingent of some ten thousand troops. But this prolonged war equally de-stabilized Pakistan and it has since also engulfed us in an unfortunate spate of terrorists activities, as a fallout. It was under these circumstances that Benazir returned to Pakistan, much against the wishes of the Military Dictator General Parvaiz Musharraf. It did not suit his plan, but she was adamant. The very day of her arrival was marred by the tragic blast on her convoy near Karsaaz. This did not hold her back. She was a courageous woman and kept pursuing her path bravely but knowing fully well the high risks involved. In a meeting with Shaukat, the widow of Dr Zafar Niazi in Islamabad, she clearly expressed her concerns and told her to pray for her and if something happened to her to look after her children. This was most meaningful! Did she have some apprehensions about her husband, Asif Ali Zardari and did she envisage any possible change of her relationship with him? There were many rumors afloat, but no one knows the real truth!

She later visited Peshawar and just the night before the fatal attack on her at Liaquat Bagh, met with General Babar. For sometimes, Babar was not in regular touch with her because of ongoing parleys with General Parvaiz Musharraf, which he strongly disapproved. This was to be the last meeting she had with any close political figure of consequence. In that meeting, Babar cautioned her about her own security and safety. He told her that in Major Imtiaz she had the wrong man in charge of her security and that she must change him. These forebodings came prophetically correct the next day. On hearing the sad news of Benazir's death, Babar rushed to Islamabad and went straight to the Airport. There he met Rehman Malik and was livid with him for not providing her adequate security and for abandoning her at the scene and moving away in the backup car with Major Imtiaz. He used some harsh words and tone to admonish him and Major Imtiaz. But the tragedy had already struck. Benazir was no more in this world and in her untimely death the whole political scene of the country changed and took a steep slide for the worst.

General Musharraf and his team of people were at length pinning the responsibility for the attack on her to Baitullah Masud. They discovered some tapes and other evidence of dubious reliability to knit together the whole background to try and prove the case for the indictment of Baitullah Masud. When Babar heard about this, he called him up saying, "If you are behind this, I will personally come myself to get hold of you." Baitullah Masud denied the insinuations being made and categorically told Babar that he wants to give him the assurances he was not behind this attack and that when the situation would temper down, he would personally come and meet him to clear his position. It is unfortunate that all the inquiries held have failed to bring the real facts and pinpoint the culprits for this heinous act of terrorism.

## CHAPTER 15

## THE MEMORABLE OCCASSIONS OF DIAMOND AND PLATINUM JUBILEE OF OUR COURSE

As the time passed, our occasion for celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of our Course was approaching. We, being the 1st PMA Long Course, had been given the proud privilege and recognized as the Pioneers of the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. This honour given to us equally demanded that we have a befitting function held for this occasion and also to have a suitable Monument placed in the Academy to commemorate this. It is an epoch-making occasion. It brought back all the nostalgic memories of the past, and yet again even in the twilight years of our lives we have a fresh resolve. We are still there to put our best foot forward for the cause of the country, and to give whatever best we can to ensure its sovereignty and security. May Allah (SWT) guide us and the country alike?

In the annual get together of the course held on February 4, 2008, we had made all the plans of having a memorable monument at Kakul Academy. There was some controversy. Our Course coordinator Major General (Retd) Azhar Ali Syed had suggested that the monument should be on a base of Taxila Stone with a Diamond made of Onyx placed on top of it. He was obviously suggesting this simple monument because of financial constraints. I had strong reservations to it and suggested that it should be worthy of the occasion: funds can be generated and they were. On this a committee was formed to examine different alternative choices available and to give their recommendations. They recommended that this proposed monument should be of solid black Granite and have a diamond made of zircon placed on top of it. This was approved and the generous donations came to finance it. Since the Diamond could not be made locally, the order for it was placed in China. My son Akbar had an office in Shanghai and so he was saddled with this task. This was completed smoothly and its safe shipment was arranged through the courtesy of our defence attaché at Beijing. The work on the granite floor and placing the base on it was also completed timely. But the Shield that was to be placed in front of it was delayed, and this was worrying Azhar the most. But I kept giving him the assurances that it will be completed in time. Azhar had preceded earlier to Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul to co- ordinate all arrangements in connection with the visit and the conduct of the function.

The news of this coming event reached the COAS, General Kiyani, and he showed his keen personal interest in it and hosted the function himself. A tribute well paid to our Course, and we were very delighted at that.

It was planned jointly by Azhar and the Commandant Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, Major General (Later General) Raheel Sharif that we should arrive at Kakul on the evening of February 3, 2010 and that the main function would be held on 4th February 2010, the day of our Diamond Jubilee. Duly 14 of us, from 1st PMA, long Course, with our families arrived at the Academy in the evening of 3rd February and were received by Commandant and his lady wife. We were all relieved that the shield to be placed at the monument had also arrived and had been fitted. When completed, it looked very elegant and dignified. All were pleased. Even the Commandant was most thrilled to see that. This was completed in the nick of time, but thank God it was there ready for the function and looked most befitting.

At night, a dinner was held in the officer's Mess. Major General Raheel Sharif hosted this and was attended by all course mates and their families. Lieutenant General (Retd) Majid Malik, who was our instructor, and Begum Farman Ali widow of our instructor late Major General Farman Ali, also attended on our request. Hamid Ali Noon, though our course mate, but did not pass out with us, was also there at the function as he always proudly considered himself to be a part of our course. All went smoothly, but the only sad part was that Major General (Retd) N.K. Babar, who was all keen to come, had a sudden setback in his health and could not make it for the occasion. We all missed him. He had been picked to deliver the address on behalf of the Course at the unveiling of the Monument. He was truly the spirit of our Course. The task was passed on to Jehandad by Azhar.

The next day was the primary function of inauguration of the monument that had been built to represent the will and the spirit of our Course.

The COAS, in full recognition of the unique importance of our Course, arrived along with his wife for its inauguration. He was introduced to all those of us who were present and their families. The ceremony started with the recitation of Holy Quran and was followed by an address of our Course Co- coordinator Major General (Retd) Azhar Ali Syed. General Kiyani in his reply highlighted the importance of the day and said it was in full recognition of our Course being the true pioneers of the Academy and the rich traditions set by them. In a light vein, he remarked that he was not even born when we graduated. After this Lieutenant General (Retd) Jehandad Khan of our course and COAS unveiled jointly the monument. General Kiyani; who was most impressed at its grandeur. He expressed the view that he had seen many monuments all over the world, but has seen very few matching the elegance and symbolism of this.

After that, COAS hosted a lunch for the members of our Course and their families. With the usual speeches at the luncheon, which again summed up the significance of the occasion, the ceremonies were wound up. It turned out to be a delightful day and Diamond Jubilee of our Course ended on a high note. This ceremony was most dignified and unique. The Commandant of Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, Major General Raheel Shareef, and his entire staff had a major hand and role in the planning and the conduct of the entire function. It will remain most memorable in our memories and will always bring back the majesty of the occasion for as long as any of us is living.

Babar could not attend our Diamond Jubilee Function because of his illness. His health right from the time that he got the stroke was deteriorating. It was on 10th January, 2011, while I was on visit to PMA, Kakul, that I got the sad news of his death. It was the end of his illustrious career. We had an association of over 63 Years. Since the joining of Air OP in 1952, we had lived as a group of close friends. This had built a close comradeship, and we had nothing but the highest trust and faith in each other. The links kept strengthening with time. His insight knowledge of Afghan mind and his close association with the earlier groups of all the warlords and later the Taliban's had endeared him in their hearts and mind and won nothing but respect and admiration from them all. Equally, at home his track record of his service in the Army was of utmost bravery and distinction. Even in the political field he had made a marked name for himself and served the governments of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and later Benazir Bhutto in all sincerity,devotion and utmost dedication; keeping his honour and dignity. In fact for Benazir, he was a father figure. In the way of his integrity, that the only property he left behind was the house that he had built in the university town, Peshawar can judge it. He was a complete image of what we thought our leadership should be at the time of very inception of Pakistan. Unfortunately, there were very few of his breed and standing. And above all he had given his best in the service of this Army and the Country. I hoped that he will get his due recognition for that. In my own way, since he was an Aviator and also a member of our Association, Veterans of Pakistan, I requested Major General (Retd) Azam to have the two wreaths prepared and bring those with him to Pirpai, his village, where he was to be buried. On reaching Pirpai, I learned that some arrangements for his burial with full Military Honours were being made by the Army Authorities, as he was a recipient of Gallantry Awards of SJ and Bar. But when the funeral was held, I was totally disillusioned. It was only an eye wash. When later, Lieutenant General (Retd) Ali Kuli, inquired from GHQ, he was told by CGS that they had given the instructions to Corpse Commander, Peshawar to handle all the arrangements. This was hardly the way to bid final farewell to one of its finest officers; a brave and a courageous man. I was deeply disappointed. His party workers were there in large numbers at his funeral and remained loyal to him till his end.

To pay our homage to him, I had a function arranged at the Islamabad Club, which was well attended. I also approached Air Marshal (Retd) M. Asghar Khan to kindly preside over the function. Since he held him in high esteem, he readily agreed. We the Aviators and also the Veterans of Pakistan made our bid to recognize his services to the Army and this Country. We pray that may his soul rest in peace in the heavenly abode.

My wife passed away on 24th April 2014 after ten years of protracted illness. In this she had to undergo four operations and an equal number of Chemotherapy Cycles. She was a very brave lady and endured all this very calmly and with due poise and serenity. I recall one occasion when the team of doctors at National Hospital, Singapore, were briefing her of all the implications and possible adverse consequences from this major surgery that she was to undergo: she kept listening to all this calmly and kept a smile on her face. This surprised the doctors, and they asked her they are rather wondering at her cool and composed demeanor! She calmly replied, “I have left everything to Allah (SWT). That is why I am not worried what may happen to me.” All the doctors admiringly acknowledged this response.

It was a companionship of 52 years that ended. The life that we lived brings back all the happy memories and I live with the thought of cherishing those. Now in her death it was a time of awe and grief. I had closely seen her brace her sickness with utmost calm; with a serene outlook and I admire her steadfastness in the times of this prolonged period of illness. It never ever depressed her and she would hardly ever grumble or felt perturbed. It showed her strength of character and utmost belief in the mercy of Allah (SWT).

For me it was a major change in life and one had to learn and live with this new loneliness and void. Luckily, the close family links were a substantial source of strength and fortitude. As I composed myself after her sad demise, my thoughts went back to complete the work of compiling my memoirs. This has since been done and I hope the book will be published soon. In, these reflections of the past I have endeavoured to bring out truly the spirit and the purpose in which these occurred as faithfully and truly as I could. I hope I succeeded.

Platinum Jubilee of our Course

Life went along and the time passed. We soon realized that the occasion for the celebration of our Platinum Jubilee was now approaching. The few of us that still survived felt that the age factor demands a simple ceremony. We did not have the energy to undertake the effort of raising another monument like the ones for our Golden and Diamond Jubilee that were gracing the premises of the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul. Both had honored us, the PMA and GHQ, in that they recognized our Course, The First PMA Long Course, truly as the Pioneers of PMA. In recognition of that, we had been given the singular honour to place monuments at the premises of PMA. While we were all proud that they were gracing the PMA, the thought of raising the monument in celebrations of our Platinum Jubilee at this age now cannot be undaunting for the few of us still alive. At the get-together of the Course on 4th February, 2019, while we were discussing this issue, some of the ladies, in particular Begum Ijaz-ud-din, came up with the idea that we must have something to remember our this historic occasion. It may be a simple plaque placed on a tree, was the suggestion. If a monument is to be placed, we felt it should be elegant enough to match the spirit and the demand of the occasion. With this thought, we concluded that we forego this privilege given to our course and have a simple celebration of this momentous occasion.

The news of this reached the Army Chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa and he sensed the unique importance of this Platinum Jubilee of our Course, The First PMA Long Course. He considered it a historic moment in that he recognized we were truly the Pioneers of Pakistan Military Academy and felt that it must be acknowledged and celebrated in that spirit. It was with these thoughts that he hosted this function himself. We felt elated, too. We had already planned to hold this in the Garrison Officers Mess, as they had excellent facilities. It suited him and so it was agreed that we all meet there on 4th February 2020.

For this function we had sent a circular to all the families of our deceased colleagues. As since 2019 get together, we have delegated all the responsibility of looking after the affairs of the course to the next generation. It has been done so that continuity of the regular activities of our course is maintained, even after all of us pass away. We are thrilled our young generation has admirably done this and have fully taken over all the responsibilities. In this notable mention must be made of Major General (Retd) Shakeel son of Brig (Retd) Uzair and Omar Saeed Malik son of Lt Col (Retd) Saeed Malik. They are in regular contact with the younger generation of our course and we hope this will give them a permanent platform. Because of their efforts, some over 40 of the families and the children of our colleagues turned up for this event.

General Qamar Javed Bajwa, along with a small staff, including DGISPR, arrived at the appointed time and expressed his happiness to be with us, the pioneers of the Pakistan Military Academy, for this momentous occasion. Four out of the six veterans, of the course, were present. The Army Chief engaged them in delightful discussion and was happy that we had such wealth of experience. He took particular interest in the account of 1965 war as Brig (Retd) Ahmad and Brig (Retd) Mian Mahmud were fully part of it. He may have read many an account of this, but he was excited to learn of the first engagement of tanks by B Squadron, which was commanded by Ahmad, with the advancing Indian Armoured Division, at Chawinda on the morning of 8th September. It was thrilling to learn the firsthand account of how initially the B Squadron and then later the rest of 25 Cavalry alone, not only stemmed the advance of the enemy 1 Armoured Division supported by two infantry divisions, but wrested the initiative from them and made them recoil back to the International Frontiers from where they had debouched in the early hours of 8th September 1965. There is no other parallel example in all the annals of Military History, it was a unique and our proudest moment.

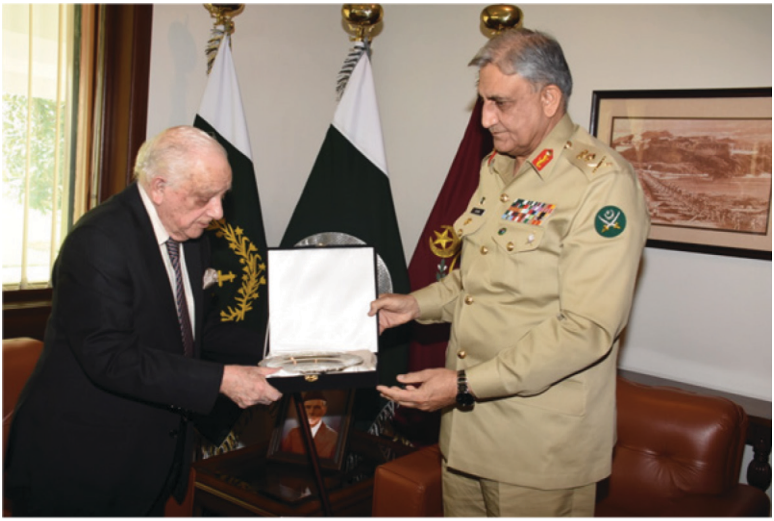
Brig (Retd) Mian Mahmud told the Army Chief that he had written a book which is likely to be published soon under the name of My Reflections in Passion. General Bajwa expressed his pleasure at that as he opined, we don’t seem to have the habit of writing and recording our thoughts and experience. That is why we find our officers write very few books as compared to the other contemporaries in the other Armed Forces of the world. It will be a welcomed addition. Brig (Retd) Mahmud requested the Chief that he would like to have this book published with no editing by any agency. General Bajwa endorsed this thought and said that he believes in the freedom of expression and hopes that it will impose no hurdles and problems in its publishing. To further reinforce this he said that if I envisage any difficulties, then I should hand over the text of the book to him and he will have it published. I felt no need for that and told him that the book is already with the publisher and hoped that it will be launched soon. I elaborated by telling him I have made my best efforts to project the truth and that it has no seditious material in it. Whatever criticism I have made; it is done only to reflect some of our weaknesses so that they may be addressed. He was in conformity with these views and it was satisfying for me.

The discussion continued over the lunch. Brig (Retd) Mian Mahmud told General Bajwa that we are now much advanced in age, and the few of us now remaining, cannot find the energy to raise a suitable monument for this. He explained that at the PMA, Kakul we have two dignified and even majestic memorials for our Golden and Diamond Jubilee celebrations and they were befitting these monumental occasions. Now for the august occasion of our Platinum Jubilee we have decided to celebrate it quietly and not to engage ourselves in any laborious effort to raise one. Graciously, General Bajwa responded we should not fret ourselves over it and that he will have this built so they symbolize the majesty of the occasion. We thanked him for this. We completed the design, which was based on our elegant model of our Diamond Jubilee, along with a team of the Army. This was approved by the C.O.A.S., and is now only awaiting completion. This should satisfy some families of our deceased colleagues who were particularly emphasizing the need to leave behind some monument, even if it is simple. So the wishes of all of them will be fulfilled and we will have a prestigious monument to leave our name in history. Later, someone made a suggestion that since we already have two monuments set up in PMA, Kakul to adorn the place, it we may be more historical to have this one set up in General Headquarters, Rawalpindi. We all agreed to this, and even General Bajwa felt it prudent to do so.

During informal discussions, General Qamar Javed Bajwa mentioned to the Veterans attending the Platinum Jubilee get together that Army has recently opened an Army Institute of Military History, which is to put on record all the experiences and memories recorded of the different generations of retired officers. This is to preserve history so that it is not forgotten. He said that we, being the Pioneers of the Pakistan Military Academy, Kakul, should set the pattern and place our experiences and observations in video recordings so that posterity remembers. It is a good idea and hope will serve the ultimate purpose. Brig (Retd) Mian Mahmud has already complied with this suggestion and has recorded all the remembrances of the start of his military career in PMA and the life that he led in the Army. I hope the others can do soon.

With these discussions and the lunch being over, formal speeches by our Course Co-ordinator Major General (Retd) Azhar Ali Syed and General Bajwa were made to highlight the significance and the uniqueness of the occasion. The Army Chief presented the shields to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee of the Course to those veterans present at the occasion. This rounded off the day made significant and memorable by General Qamar Javed Bajwa hosting the function himself. It received wide publicity on the TV and press and the Nation learned about the significance of the day and this made us all proud.

*The Veterans of 1st PMA Long Course presenting the shield to General Qamar Javed Bajwa*

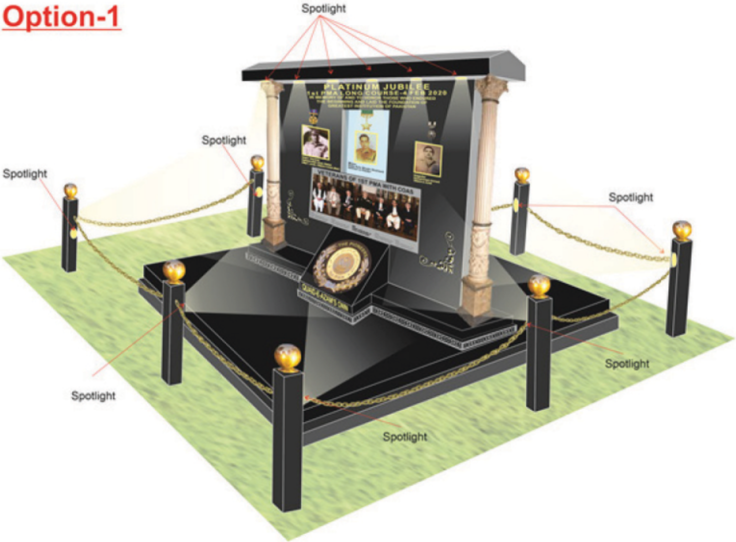


*The Author receiving the shield from General Qamar Javed Bajwa*

The Veterans of 1st PMA Long Course with General Qamar Javed Bajwa

The Veterans and the families of our colleagues with
General Qamar Javed Bajwa

## Option-1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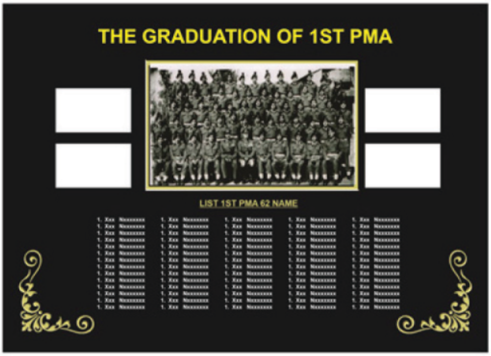
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## CHAPTER 16

## GEO-POLITICAL COMPULSIONS OF PAKISTAN

Events of 9/11 provided a time jump and hastened to rationalise a long contemplated US strategic move based on Mackinder's Doctrine. This doctrine led to forward policies against USSR and Afghanistan and containment of the Pacific Rim targeting Eurasian Landmass comprising including China.

Brezinski's strategic prescription of an Integrated Euro Asian Geo-Strategy was an advancement of this strategy improved with technology and economics. Unlike the times of Admiral Mahan, navies were now more modern with a punch of aerial systems, ground forces and nuclear weapons. Firing platforms got revolutionized as were the technology to conduct strikes with remote control. Economic interdependence and dependence could forge bigger military alliances and contain the enemy. It was a game plan of "Full Spectrum Dominance" He wrote, "America entrenched itself on both the extreme western and extreme eastern shores of the great Eurasian continent. The defence of these continental bridgeheads (epitomised on the Western front by the Berlin Blockade and the Eastern by the Korean War) was the first strategic test of what came to be known as the Cold War!" As time passed, this was reinforced by the Taiwan policy, Vietnam War and Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Paul Kennedy had described South West Asia as the Fulcrum in which Pakistan was the important pivot. After 9/11 USA seized an opportunity to firmly control this pivot. Military, Naval, Air and Missile Power was in their favour bolstered by alliances and computeronics. Hence the invasion of Afghanistan partly UN sanctioned and mostly on whims of the American policy makers. Plans for were war-gamed. 9/11 was too tempting an opportunity to miss.

### The New CIA-Pentagon Plan. Conflict Begins to Lead Policy.

As postulated in the first edition, it was indeed the conflict and not the policy that led American Strategy Middle East and South West Asia. The withdrawal from Afghanistan proves there was no coherent policy or Ends-Means logic. Post withdrawal events vindicate my decades old hypotheses.

Within two days after 9/11, the CIA Plan was outlined emphatically; expanded at Camp David two days later. The overarching element was the Bush doctrine of Broad Spectrum Dominance justified on hasty and preconceived notion that Afghan Taliban complicity. War was ready to lead policy.

George Tenet states, “Ours was a new strategy, unlike any other in recent American history.” Indeed, in retrospect, it was so. CIA told the President, “We need to go fast and light.”

It is rather bemusing that hinged into a complete departure from the conventional strategy and military thought; the American forces would arrive in Northern Afghanistan as insurgents. Northern Alliance would provide the bridgehead and operate in concert with Special Forces and CIA. Gary Schroen to head this team. He arrived in Afghanistan within two weeks of the 9/11 attack. He was deeply knowledgeable about the region, was friendly with many Afghan warlords and fluent in the local languages of Dari and Farsi. Suspiciously, prior to 9/11 he had visited Northern Afghanistan and forged all needed contacts. This nucleus was an advance party of CIA operations for the next several years.

It, therefore, becomes but not obvious that contrary to Geo-Political Compulsions of Pakistan the plan so conceived deliberately did not cater for any contacts with the main force of Taliban’s who represented most Pashtun population. It is also evident that against their stated aim and goal of making it a quick and lightening offensive, the American organizational bias suggested they came clearly to stay in this area for several years. A plan as it proved two decades later was contemptuous of ground realities.

Who then were the advisors? They had quick success because of the massive Air Power employed and the use of the new technology. They conceived that once they proceed southwards beyond Kabul, everything would fall in place. The Taliban rather than give any pitched fight reacted wisely and melted away. Soon the resistance built up within Afghanistan, and it has continued since. The obvious disadvantage was that that the entire debris of militants, warlords and resistance fighters was systematically pushed into Pakistan.

General Musharraf in his stupid thinking took a plunge in this to support the American Great Game Plan. He took this big decision all by himself without ever consulting any of his close policy makers and advisors. There is an interesting anecdote.

It was at the house of Brigadier (Retd) Niaz where he was playing bridge, that he got the call from General Powell. The famous demands were made by the Americans and they wanted his answer if he was with them or against. Instead of asking for some time to deliberate and dilate, he while sitting there gave his full commitment and support. Consequently, Pakistan was sucked into this turmoil and chaos setting off sympathetic waves of violence. Pakistan is suffering acts of terrorism. Though much normalcy has returned in the past 15 years, it is still a long way to go before we can overcome this crisis. I do not want to dwell at length on this as this can become a very lengthy discourse, and may not serve fully the purpose of my compiling my thoughts.

After the attack on Afghanistan, when Dr Henry Kissinger met President Bush, he told him, "They tried to humiliate us. You need to act and do more. You humiliate them before they do." The resultant was invasion of Iraq. Whom does he refer to? To remove the ambiguity, one needs to guess intelligently.

The world has since been in turmoil and entire Middle East, which has lit up in flames in the pretext of War against Terrorists! The Geo-Political situation in the region after the 9/11 attacks and the American Military reaction in Afghanistan has been since dramatically changing. In the furtherance of their strategic interests, new equilibriums are attempted. In a strategic blunder of firing from a destabilized moving platform, objectives and tactics keep changing.

Herein lies the kaleidoscope of this strategic muddle. These emerge from different studies undertaken by various funded think tanks of America paid to advance interests of the military industrial complex. I have critically examined many such studies.

The first important study was undertaken by Rand Corporation, and this was tasked by Pentagon. Later another report under the title, "World at Risk" was compiled; for this Congress formed a Commission, headed by Senator Bob Graham. This report was presented to the President George W. Bush on December 2, 2008. The commission was headed for Pakistan, (an area of interest to this Commission and America). The news of bombing of Marriott Hotel, Islamabad, forced the cancellation of the visit. Thereafter, the commission took 180 days to complete this report, without ever visiting the vital area of their interest. What input they could have received and as to whose advice and counsel it represented could be anyone's guess?

It reminded me how Zulme Khalilzad was earlier built as the expert on Afghanistan and later the entire world. These and many other reports and studies in the offing portend significant challenges for Pakistan.

How realistic they are and what are the motivations needs a close study. I along with a small group of eminently qualified people, based both at Islamabad/Rawalpindi and Lahore, have been regularly reviewing all these reports and keep making our own evaluation of what they portend; with objective analysis and recommendations.

Couched in the hypothesis of the Worst-Case Scenario, these studies emphasize the potential risk of Nuclear Weapons of Pakistan falling in the hands of terrorist groups. This destbalisation trajectory caused by terrorism and bad governance subsequently echoes in many other studies on Pakistan.

How in their wisdom or on some advice of their so-called experts of the area, they portray this trajectory is hard to reconcile! They obviously have their plans all ready to deal with this contingency. This stipulates a very serious option for the USA to interject and implement.

It is important for Pakistan to address this concern of the American policy makers. Pakistan has been a very responsible Nuclear Power, and we have placed implicit and foolproof checks to secure these assets. To insensate this viable concern or fear, we can ingeminate any further plausible steps.

For Pakistan, acquiring of Nuclear Technology is no luxury to adopt, but has been impelled through Indian intransigence. We can resolve all problems with India, but it is the basic core Kashmir issue that is an inveterate problem. If this is amicably settled, we may find no need for these Nuclear Weapons. The world needs to recognize the inalienable right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to choose their own destiny.

If principles and moral authority are to be dispensed at the altar of expediency of interests built on illusionary hypotheses, then it is totally a new game plan. In this course, if the American's embark on a radical shift to lending full support to India in their nefarious designs and plans, then it becomes a disparate equation for Pakistan. Through foreign and military diplomacy, Pakistan tirelessly worked to prevent this from happening, even at the cost of taking some US strikes on its own troops. However, happened it has; and India has since become an important component of the US led Indo-Pacific Alliance.

If enduring peace is the option in South West Asia, then the sequence of events and the events unfolding ought to be different. Now back to the pre script.

Pakistan's pivotal position in this fulcrum, needed emphasizes for any durable and lasting influence of America in this region. If not, then the script suggests Pakistan as a foe rather than an ally. As events stand today, this is the worst-case scenario and happened.

After the US military exit, new ground realities have emerged. We must look at these dispassionately, and must have our plans and policies ready to balance this catastrophic equation. There are indeed tangible and viable options within this caustic situation. We must look at all our options and choices carefully and act with wisdom and foresight.

**Geo-Political Compulsions of Pakistan.** It is the political leadership of the country, which has to address this in concert with the defence planners and support of all the political parties. The Nation has to Rise Collectively and Stand United. We need to fully understand the implications and the purport of these reports, and assess for ourselves the long- term planning and the designs that the American's have for this region. We need to analyze and review these, to ponder and reflect as to what policies we should develop to secure our National Interests. Our response has to be crafted very carefully and readjusted to new challenges.

In so doing, we must recognize the need that we are not looking for any possible confrontation with America. It is a superpower and we have traditionally enjoyed a very close relationship with them; Military to Military contacts in particular.

Right from the times of Ayub Khan, it is the CENTCOM which has been the architect of all policies and plans for this very crucial region. Pakistan has played a very significant role towards the ends means relationship of strategic objectives.

International relationship does not recognize any fixed positions of friendship and is always there to serve their own vested interests. But even now the strategic importance of Pakistan has not lost its significance and the potential role that it can play.

What has changed very radically is the sudden emergence of India as their new Strategic Alliance partner. In their plans of containment of China, American policy makers assign a major role for India. Like the Middle East, where Israel emerged as the important pivot for their domination of the region, and to emerge as the policeman of the area; the Think Tank in America feel the potential of India being assigned a similar role. It is this radically changed thinking of the American policy makers that poses a new challenge for Pakistan.

To constantly review and reassess this fast changing imponderability being imposed, I along with a small group are amply seized with all its implications and keep examining all pragmatic options that we may have. However, this effort is a modest pretension. We need to significantly strengthen this and embody a team of requisite experience and talent, which should portentously handle this vital assignment for Pakistan. We need to pick the best brains of diversified experience and tasked to accomplish it. They need full recognition of their enjoined task and function, and need to function on permanent fortitude and resolve to serve as the eyes and the mind of this Nation. They would need the input of all essential institutions and whatever brainstorming they do, must find access to all relevant quarters of policy makers with due weightage given to their findings and recommendations.

We must regress from all ad hoc process of decision making of the past and learn to act on collective wisdom and amenable advice. We are traditionally a very trusted friend of China, and it has been My Reflections in Passsion equally enshrined and incumbent policy of China to stand by with Pakistan in all its tribulations and trials. We cannot forsake this link. We must incuse this basic relationship as a bedrock of our Foreign Policy.

What we can impress on the American Policy makers is the indefeasibility of their renewed thinking. It is on two counts.

First, is the wisdom of their policy of containment of China? It is one country which has no imperialistic designs and in fact a long term co-operation of USA and China offers many possibilities of lasting peace in the world and developed economies of the two countries.

Secondly, in picking the role of India in their designs of containment of China, they have not read the Indian mind set and its psyche correctly. We have lived with them for several centuries and can understand their cunning and conniving acts better than anyone. It would be a fallacy if the American's think that India will either fight their proxy war against China or even give any help and assistance. If the American's go to any war against China, they must remember that they will have to do it entirely by themselves!

India will keep exploiting their position and keep extracting all the advantages of their newly wed relationship of Strategic Alliance, but if and when they have to fight for America or even render any help to them in any times of war, they will not find them there. Don't count on them is the only sincere advice that we can give. Yes, if they assign them the role to act as the hegemonic power of the region, they will be too willing and keen to act.

It is this role of India that Pakistan must guard against. We must through our policy interaction and active lobby, advise them against it. We need to impress that all the regional powers stand threatened and they will have to evolve their collective response.

In Afghanistan, India has hardly any link or role left. Northern Alliance, for the sake of keeping the area united, will have to listen to them and heed their advice.

The two adjoining countries to Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan, have equal interest in long-term stability of the area, and this cannot happen if India is handed over the ambitious task to act as the policeman of the region.

Such are the compulsions that all the powers that have stakes in the region, need to understand and recognize. Short of that, it will ensure nothing but chaos and uncertainty forcing Pakistan to review its strategic balance.

Pakistan is inadvertently sucked into the vortex of the greater game plan of the unipolar world. This has been in the offing for a very long time, but events have precipitated the unfolding of these plans rather dramatically.

This full spectrum domination, as envisaged under the Mckinder and Brezinski doctrine, has assumed an alarming proportion. In this new game plan, the emergence of India as a new strategic partner of America is posing a very serious challenge for Pakistan. The world balance of power, which tilted radically in favour of America after the Russian defeat in Afghanistan, is once again in transition. The privilege of emerging as the unipolar power of the world, which America had ascended to, is now on the decline. The entire world is in a state of flux! The re-emergence of Russia once again as the Military power of the world, and the fast gaining of China as a new world power to be, are now balancing the equation of relationship in this new global equilibrium. This does not leave America in a position of total dominance.

The new emerging power relationship holds the key for the future and warrants Pakistan to redefine and develops its new Foreign Policy.

In this reset, we must be prudent. It is not our aim and nor in our National Interest to take any position of confrontation with America, but if the American Plans impinge directly on our Sovereignty and Security, then we have to react and respond.

For any long term sustenance of their presence and role in this region, America would need the support of Pakistan. This can only come as a qualified support with limitations and constraints.

For sure, Pakistan has no role and part in US plans of containment of China. We have to emphatically impress upon America that nor is this in their own vital National Interests. They must find accommodation and reconciliation with them. It is solely this predilection that can ensure the safety and the security of the world, and equally become the promise of future prosperity and equilibrium.

If stability in Afghanistan is the ultimate aim of USA, then Pakistan is best located and suited to help them achieve these objectives. It is equally essential for Pakistan to have a stable and peaceful Afghanistan, because without this the terrorist's activities that have been generated as the consequence of American and Indian intervention in the region will be hard to control leave alone eliminate.

This menace has assumed alarming proportions, and can be addressed if Afghanistan and Pakistan sincerely co-operate. The people of Afghanistan have always been friendly with the people of Pakistan. They enjoy strong cultural links and traditional brotherly relationship. It was always the rulers of Afghanistan who exploited the situation by creating rifts and fissures between them. For the good of their own people and for the prosperity and progress of the region, the sooner the policy makers in Afghanistan realize this the better it would be.

In the past, on three separate occasions the American's wittingly or unwittingly missed opportunities. Whether it was a part of their plan to persist with chaos or instability, to justify their occupation of Afghanistan, is a mute question to ask? But in the future and in the long run, it cannot be their option! Either they strengthen their position in the region or else let it wither away for other powers to exploit.

Pakistan inherits a key role that cannot be substituted. Any desperate insipience to seek so would be tantamount to tottering the region and even the world. The incredible risks demand sanguine thoughts and sagacious response.

It is only a brief analysis of the situation that has permeated this region.

But to reinforce and to give any meaningful implications that it augurs and portends, a reference to a meeting held with Walter R. Meade, an American Academic and intellectual who is a recognized authority on Foreign Relations, with the Veterans of Pakistan, a few years ago will be a relevant foreboding. He is also Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow for US Foreign Policy. He was on a visit of Pakistan and his meeting with Veterans of Pakistan was officially organized by the American Embassy in Pakistan.

The team of Veterans of Pakistan was led by Air Chief Marshal (Retd) Kaleem Saadat and included Air Marshal (Retd) Masud Akhtar, Brigadier (Retd) Syed Masud-ul-Hassan, Brigadier (Retd) Samson Simon Sharaf and myself. Our President, Admiral (Retd) Fasih Bokhari was to lead the team, but he declined to attend as the American Embassy had objected to the name of Lieutenant General (Retd) Hamid Gul, who was part of the original names given, and so consequently the team was reconstituted.

The meeting was hosted by the American Embassy at the Serena Hotel, Islamabad, and one official of the Embassy accompanied Mr Meade. In his opening discourse, Mr Meade at great length went on to elaborate, "India is a growing economy and that yours is a shrinking economy. It is in your interest that you better find accommodation with them." Bewildered by this clear and strong message, we proclaimed, "How do you suggest that." The answer forthcoming was, "It is up to you to find out." He had clearly laid out his mind before us. It was not leaving any alternative or options with us. We had to compose our thoughts and in an emancipated response, we proclaimed:

"Mr Meade, Pakistan has an effusive history of good relationship with America. We have in all sincerity a reminiscent trail of abiding by and fulfilling all our pledges and commitments. They have come even at the peril of our security. We acknowledge all the help and support provided to us. But in the new found quest for your global aspirations and objectives, you have picked emerging power in India to befriend and rely on, it is your prerogative. How radically they have shifted from their stance of non-alignment reflects their mindset and obsession with gaining their goals regardless of how they come. We know their psyche better than anyone. The same thing we had conveyed to Mr Chou-en–Lai in his initial meeting with Mr Bhutto and General Gul Hassan, but he took scant notice of it. But after the Chinese encounter with India, in 1962, he himself raised this subject with both Mr Bhutto and General Gul Hassan. He told both that he did not take this advice too seriously but now understands the full significance and the purport of it. He assured them that from now onwards; he will surely seek this and rely upon in the future."

Walter Russel Mead listened patiently, but there was no clear response from him. To felaborate, we stated,

"Indian mindset has not forgotten the 700 years rule of the Muslims in India. Even Jawahar Lal Nehru, had not forgotten the days of the Ashoka Empire, and how he expressed his aspirations to see those days come back again with the Indian Empire stretching up to the Hindu Kush Mountains, were not lost on us. They will do any and everything to achieve that. It is only our firm resolve and determination that intercepts them and their dreams. And we are committed to it."

There was no reaction from him, but perhaps he knew what we were trying to express. To sum it, we said,

"If you think that you can rely on Indian support in your plans and objectives, then you will be sadly mistaken. They will draw maximum benefits and advantages from this newly emerging relationship, but mind you, when the chips are down, you will not find them standing with you."

This was our concluding advice and message for him. Having heard our views, he was still advocating his theme of us finding accommodation with India. It was at this inconclusive note that the meeting ended.

We can all draw our conclusions, but what the future holds for us will remain our main concern. To this end, we need the total National Unity and steadfast resolve.

The Pandemic of Covid 19 in just over two years has deranged all the patterns of economic development throughout the world. The fast growing economies, like those of India and some other countries, have had a severe setback and are now tottering to stabilize again. Though Pakistan too sustained the effects of this Corona virus, but managed to reasonably control its devastating effects on the economy. In this the CPEC and the help of some friendly countries proved beneficial. The rising inflation and the increasing costs of prices of all essential items, caused by this Pandemic, affected the entire globe and Pakistan too is facing its severe effects. But hopefully this is likely to improve in the near future and Pakistan will most likely be able to overcome its effects. With the change of economic cycle, the economy of Pakistan will hopefully stabilize and achieve a sustainable healthy economic growth. A strong economic base is important. Without this no country can pursue an independent Foreign

Policy and withstand the pressures and the black mailing of the powerful power groups of the world. It is equally essential to negate the prognosis as set by Mr Meade in his meeting with us. The key to our future lies in having a strong economic base. All the economic indicators are showing a promising sign and hopefully Pakistan will attain a sustainable growth.

The glittering history of Afghanistan, since its occupation by America and its allies for the last 20 years, have under gone a dramatic change. With the exit of USA and its allies and the sudden emergence of Taliban as the sole power in control of Afghanistan, a totally new and unexpected equation has gripped this area of great international significance and importance. Though America had reached a peace accord with Taliban's at Doha and their time schedule for their evacuation honored, the haste and the unplanned way that it happened, was a complete surprise. To crown it all the emergence of the Taliban's as the only power in control of whole of Afghanistan, came as a complete shock and surprise to America and the Ashraf Ghani Government. The fact that this happened so quickly without any noticeable resistance totally baffled them. The Pentagon had raised a force of 300,000 troops for the Afghan Government and had them equipped and trained, was a promise that there will be no walkover for the Taliban and this proved to be a misplaced judgement and analysis. The ease and the speed with which the Taliban's moved in and took control of the whole of Afghanistan negated best American strategists. There were some pockets of resistance by some local war lords, as in Panjsher Valley, but that too was overcome.

This portends a new threat to the equilibrium. Afghanistan has had historical tenors of divisive fissures in their society. This cannot be overcome so easily and needs an inclusive Government of all the powers of the area.

Last time that the Taliban's came to power Northern Alliance was a major force to reckon. In recognition of this reality, when the Taliban's captured Kabul, they were advised by Major General (Retd) Babar not to proceed beyond Kabul as it will result in civil war. Since Taliban's held his opinion and advise in great esteem they abided by it. It was in this vacuum that Ahmad Shah Masud, Dostum and some others emerged as regional powers in the areas of their influence.

In the current takeover of the Taliban, their hold is complete over the whole of Afghanistan. But there is no confluence of regional powers and their interest. The fissures that so exist must all be brought on board and consensus developed to have greater stability in the country.

In the last Taliban regime, Major General (Retd) Babar, had to mediate between them and the Northern Alliance. As stated earlier, after several visits he brokered an agreement between them. In this it was agreed that Afghanistan will be a Confederation and the interest of the provinces will be secured and safeguarded. This draft of the agreement should be available with the Foreign Office and could well be the basis of discussions between the Taliban and other regional powers. In fact, for any durable and lasting peace in Afghanistan, an overall understanding between these different power groups is of paramount importance.

Luckily, all the factions in Afghanistan, have a firm resolve that its identity as one country must be preserved. There are no divisive tendencies and no one wants its division into any separate provinces. This should make the atmosphere conducive for a meaningful and result oriented discussion. Pakistan can and should play a constructive role in this. If this overall understanding can be amicably achieved, Afghanistan can have a bright future.

The threat of the Daesh is another separate issue, which would need the urgent attention. The Government of Afghanistan must make a determined effort to eliminate this nefarious group which has the potential of destroying peace in Afghanistan and even pose a danger for the world. For this the co-operation of the International Agencies would be radically forthcoming. They must all be fathomed to eradicate this menace.

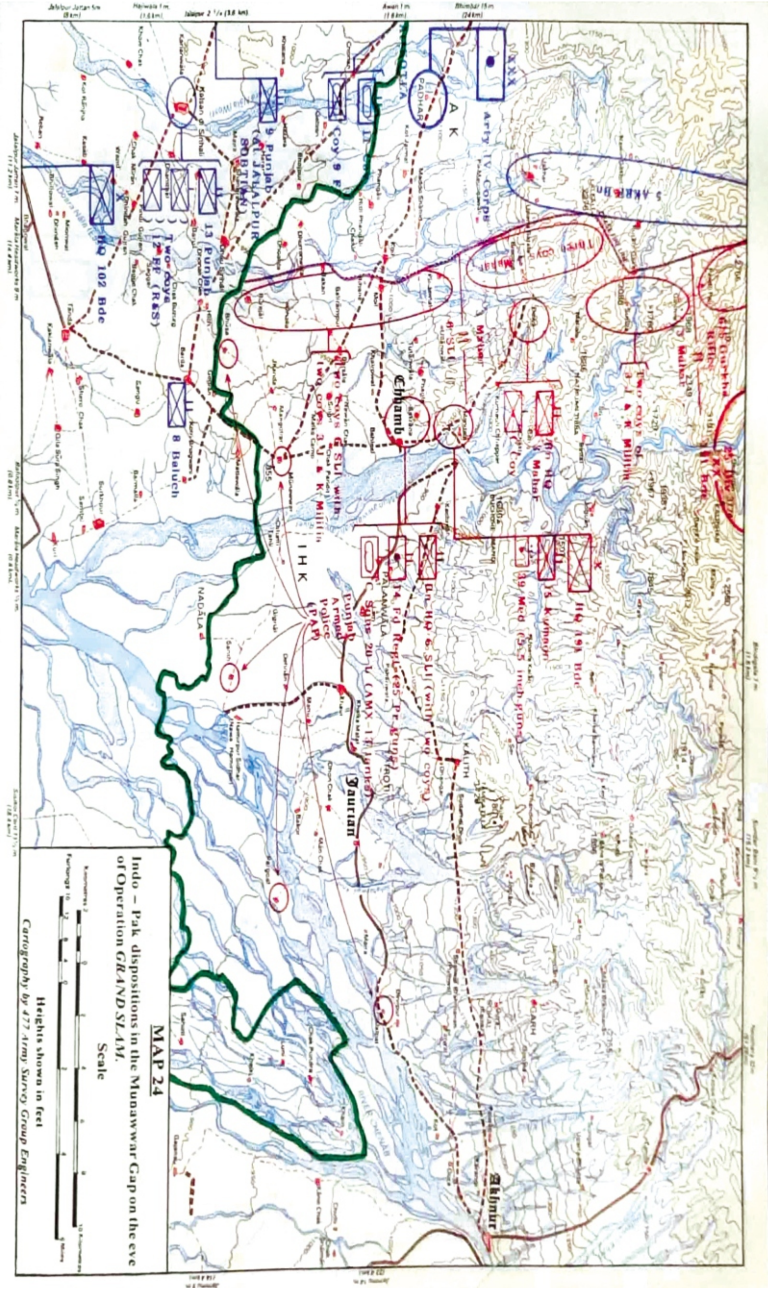
Once all these internal problems are resolved, Afghanistan can embark on a period of its economic growth through exploitation of their mineral wealth and serving as a conduit between Central Asian Republics, even including Russia, and the warm port of Gwadar. The potential of this route is tremendous and the economic fallout from this also has a vast scope for Afghanistan including Pakistan. In fact, if India has any wisdom, they too can be a part of this economic Bonanza by settling the dispute of Kashmir and fully participating and benefitting from this opportunity. It can change the landscape of the entire region. This can only come if there is peace and stability in Afghanistan.

After their exit from Afghanistan, the American's have not lost their strategic interest in this region, which they once described as area of their Full Spectrum Dominance. Of course, the situation has undergone a radical change. The firm base of Afghanistan is no longer with them and they are now not the unipolar power of the world. If America still needs to exercise their influence in this region, it can only come with the co-operation of Pakistan and Afghanistan with prudence.

The current US Shift of strategic alliance with India has lost its relevance. If still they are desperate to pursue that for containment of China; it cannot serve their purpose as in reaction it will invite new alignments of the other powers in this region. It will be a disparate situation for them. Pakistan cannot afford to forsake their national interest, as done in the past to achieve their hegemonic aims in the region. Fatally, it could usher a new Cold War and a multi polar world.

# Annexures

Dispositions own and enemy troops -1 September Annexure-1


HQ 102 Bde
8 Baluch
13 Punjab
Two Coys 12 FF (R&S)
9 Punjab (at JAJALPUR SOBTIAN)
Coy 9 FF
Arty IV Corps
5 AK
Chhamb
Jaurian
Akhnur
HQ 191 Bde
15 Kumaon
Bn HQ 6 SLI (with two coys)
14 Fd Regt (25 Pr guns)
20 L (AMX 13 Tanks)
Punjab Armed Police (PAP)
Two coys 6 SLI with two coys 3 J & K Militia
Three Coys Mahar
3 Mahar
6 SLI
IHK
NADALA
PADHAR

MAP 24

Indo – Pak dispositions in the Munawwar Gap on the eve of Operation *GRANDSLAM.*

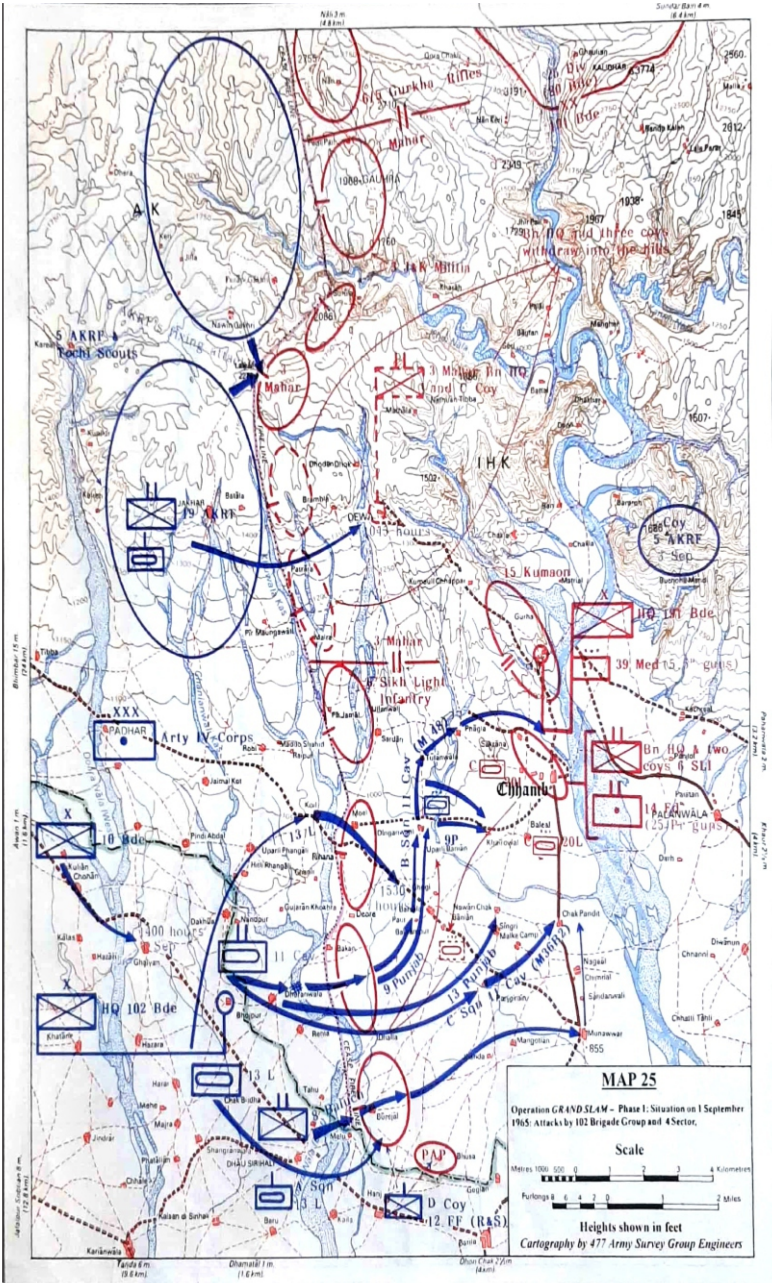
Scale

Heights shown in feet

*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*

Plan of attack 12 Division

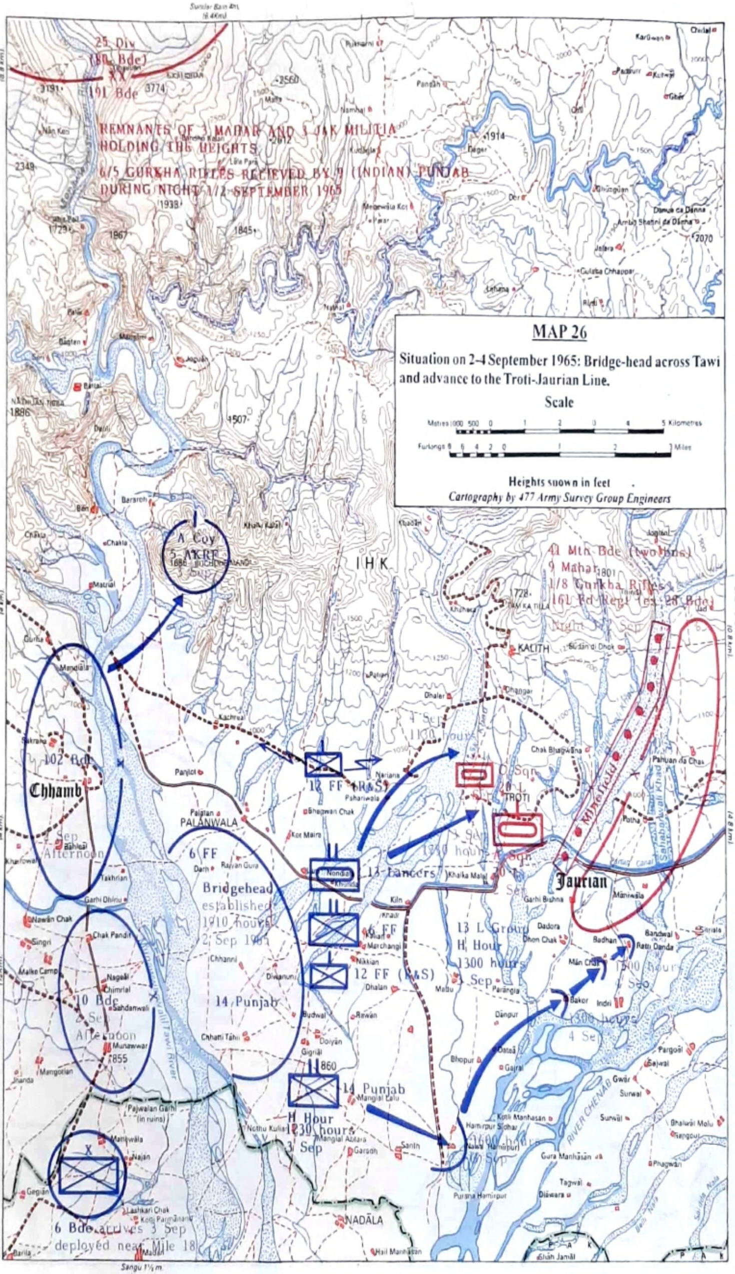
Annexure-2


MAP 25

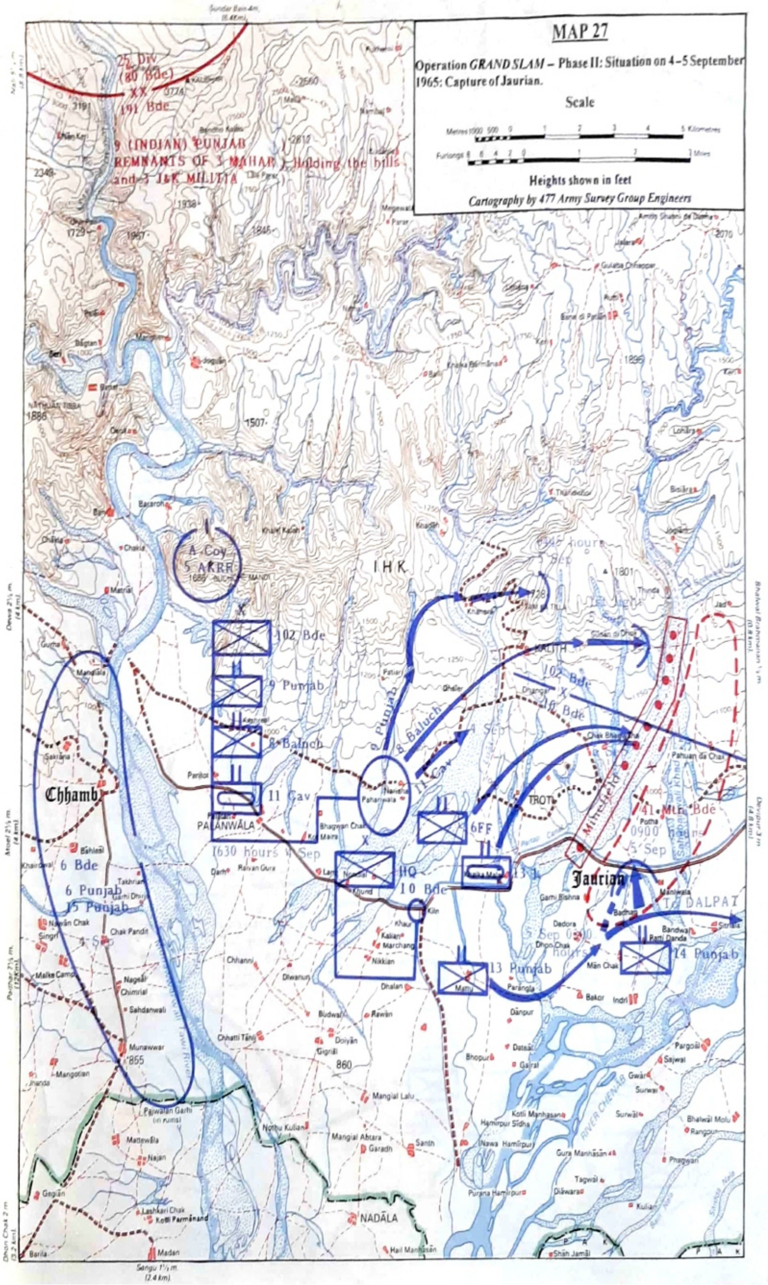
Operation *GRAND SLAM* – Phase I: Situation on 1 September 1965: Attacks by 102 Brigade Group and 4 Sector.

Scale
Metres 1000 500 0 1 2 3 4 Kilometres
Furlongs 8 6 4 2 0 1 2 Miles
Heights shown in feet
*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*
A K
I H K
5 AKRF
Tochi Scouts
19 AKRF
Mahar
6/5 Gurkha Rifles
26 Div (80 Bde)
191 Bde
3 J&K Militia
Bn HQ and three coys withdraw into the hills
3 Mahar Bn HQ and C Coy
DEWA
0645 hours
15 Kumaon
Coy 5 AKRF 3 Sep
HQ 191 Bde
39 Med
6 Sikh Light Infantry
Arty IV Corps
PADHAR
11 Cav (M 48)
Chhamb
Bn HQ & two coys 6 SLI
14 Fd (25 Pr guns)
PALANWALA
10 Bde
9P
20L
1530 hours
1400 hours 1 Sep
11 Cav
9 Punjab
13 Punjab
C Sqn 11 Cav (M36B2)
B Sqn 11 Cav
13 L
HQ 102 Bde
A Sqn 13 L
D Coy 12 FF (R&S)
PAP
Munawwar
855
Bhimbar 15 m (24 km)
Awan 1 m (1.6 km)
Tanda 6 m (9.6 km)
Dhamatal 1 m (1.6 km)
Dhon Chak 2½ m (4 km)
Khaur 2½ m (4 km)
Paharwala 2 m (3.2 km)
Nali 3 m (4.8 km)
Sundar Bani 4 m (6.4 km)
CEASE FIRE LINE

Outline plans of attack 10 Bde and 102 Bde 3 September Annexure-3


MAP 26
Situation on 2-4 September 1965: Bridge-head across Tawi and advance to the Troti-Jaurian Line.
Scale
Metres 1000 500 0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometres
Furlongs 8 6 4 2 0 1 2 3 Miles
Heights shown in feet
Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers
25 Div (80 Bde)
XX
191 Bde
REMNANTS OF 3 MADAR AND 3 J&K MILITIA HOLDING THE HEIGHTS
6/5 GURKHA RIFLES RELIEVED BY 9 (INDIAN) PUNJAB DURING NIGHT 1/2 SEPTEMBER 1965
A Coy 5 AKRF
102 Bde
Chhamb
3 Sep Afternoon
6 FF
Bridgehead established 1910 hours 2 Sep 1965
14 Punjab
10 Bde 2 Sep Afternoon
6 Bde arrives 3 Sep deployed near Mile 18
12 FF (R&S)
13 Lancers
6 FF
12 FF (R&S)
14 Punjab
H Hour 1230 hours 3 Sep
4 Sep 1100 hours
C Sqn
TROTI
3 Sep 1730 hours A Sqn
13 L Group H Hour 1300 hours 3 Sep
1300 hours 4 Sep
1500 hours 4 Sep
1600 hours 3 Sep
41 Mtn Bde (two bns)
9 Mahar
1/8 Gurkha Rifles
161 Fd Regt (ex 28 Bde)
Night 3/4 Sep
Minefield
Jaurian
KALITH
PALANWALA
IHK
Munawwar Tawi River
RIVER CHENAB
NADALA
Sundar Bani 4 m (6.4 km)
Nali 5½ m (8.8 km)
Dewa 2½ m (4 km)
Moel 2½ m (4 km)
Padhar 7½ m (12 km)
Dhon Chak 2 m (3.2 km)
Sangu 1½ m (2.4 km)
Bhalwal Brahmanan 6¾ m (10.8 km)
Devipur 3 m (4.8 km)
P A K

By passing of Troti and Jaurian 4 September Annexure-4



MAP 27

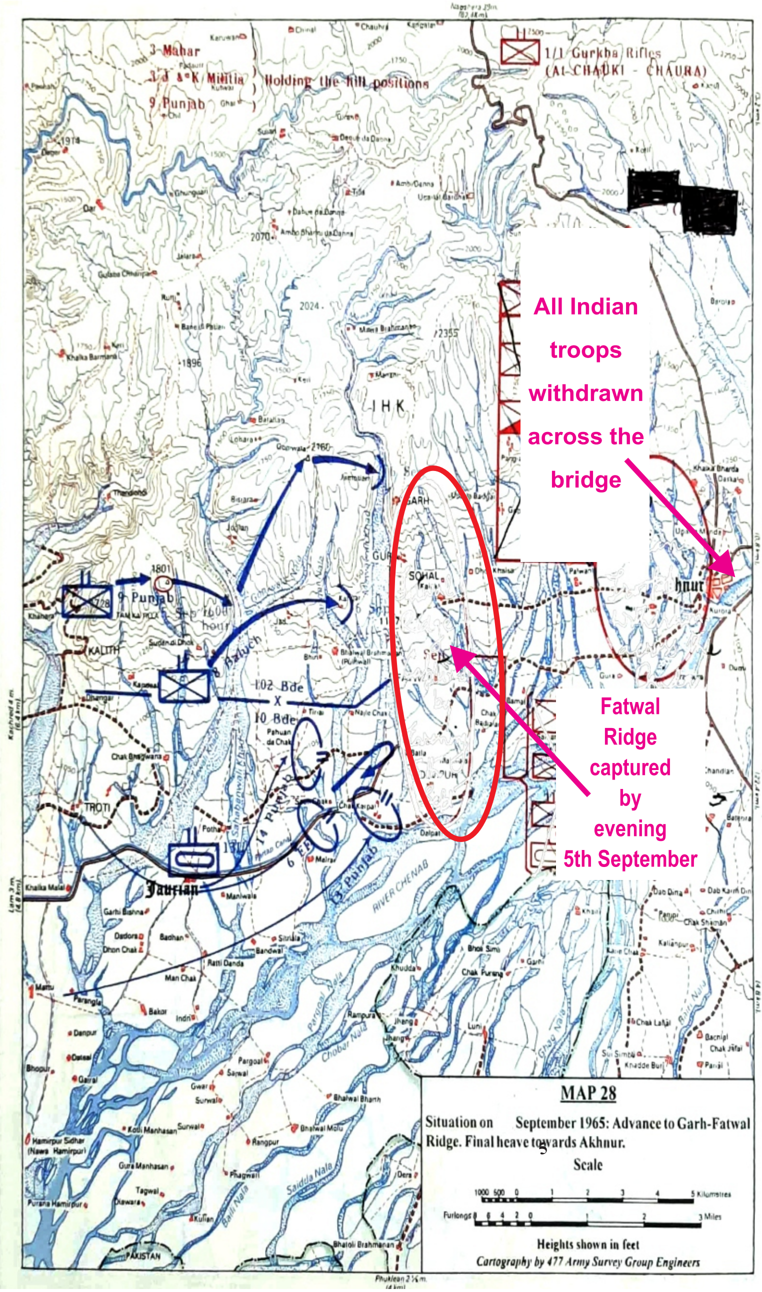
Operation *GRAND SLAM* – Phase II: Situation on 4–5 September 1965: Capture of Jaurian.

Scale

Heights shown in feet

*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*

Metres 1000 500 0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometres
Furlongs 8 6 4 2 0 1 2 3 Miles
25 Div
(80 Bde)
XX
191 Bde
9 (INDIAN) PUNJAB
REMNANTS OF 3 MAHAR
and 3 J&K MILITIA
Holding the hills
A Coy
5 AKRR
102 Bde
9 Punjab
8 Baluch
11 Cav
PALANWALA
1630 hours 4 Sep
HQ
10 Bde
6 FF
13 Punjab
14 Punjab
13 L
Chhamb
6 Bde
6 Punjab
15 Punjab
4 Sep
IHK
102 Bde
10 Bde
4 Sep
TROTI
Minefield
41 Mtn Bde
0900 hours 5 Sep
5 Sep 0400 hours
Jaurian
To DALPAT
Tawi River
RIVER CHENAB
Sundar Bain 4m (6.4 km)
Dewa 2½ m (4 km)
Moel 2½ m (4 km)
Padhar 2½ m (4 km)
Dhon Chak 2 m (3.2 km)
Sangu 1½ m (2.4 km)
Bhalwal Brahmanan ½ m (0.8 km)
Devipur 3 m (4.8 km)
Munawwar
Mangotian
Pallanwala
Nadala
Manawar
Kharianwala
Dhalan
Bhopur
Gajral
Pargoal
Sajwal
Surwal
Nathuan Tibba
2349
1729
1967
1938
1845
1507
1886
1801
2070
2812
2560
3774
3191
860
855
PAK
PAK


3 Mahar
1/3 J & K Militia
9 Punjab
Holding the hill positions
1/1 Gurkha Rifles
(AL-CHAUKI - CHAURA)
9 Punjab
S+6 1600 hour
8 Baluch
102 Bde
10 Bde
14 Punjab
6 EBR
13 Punjab
GARH
SOHAL
FATWAL
DALPUR
KALITH
TROTI
Jaurian
Akhnur
RIVER CHENAB
PAKISTAN

[redacted]

All Indian troops withdrawn across the bridge

Fatwal Ridge captured by evening 5th September

MAP 28

Situation on September 1965: Advance to Garh-Fatwal Ridge. Final heave towards Akhnur.

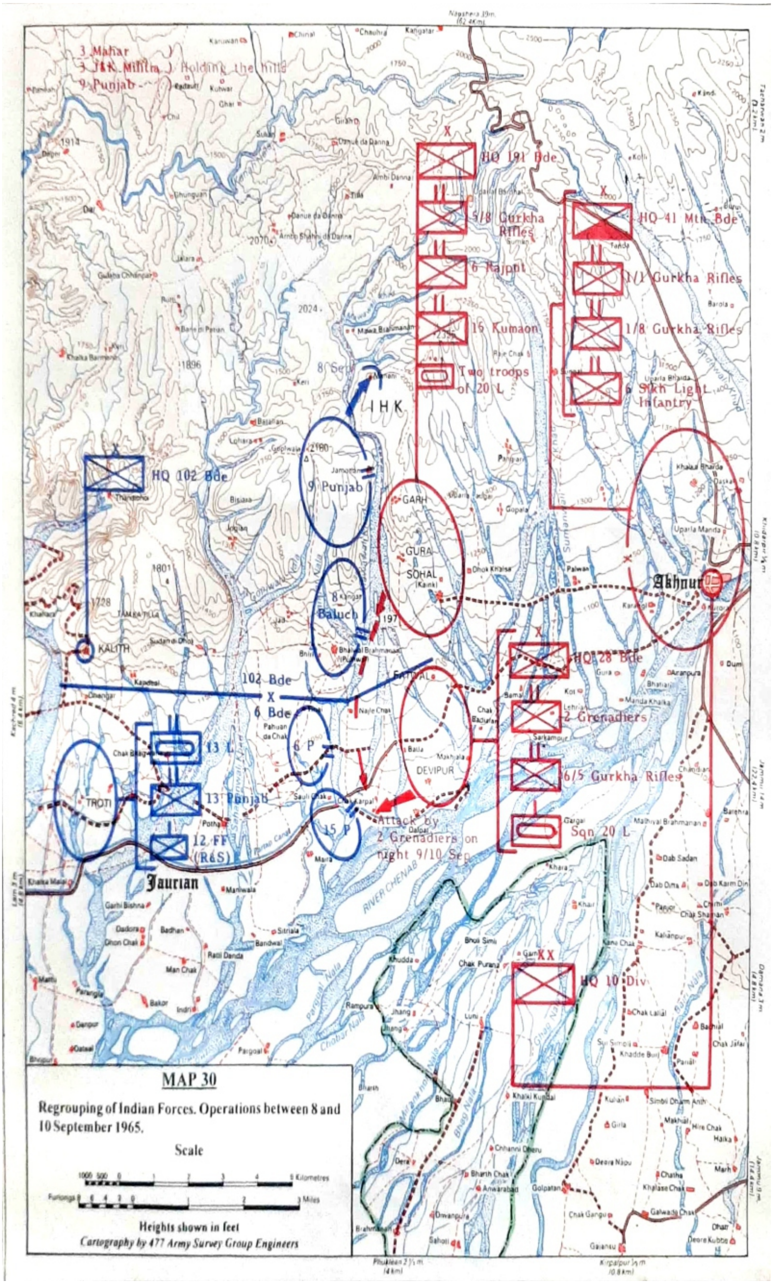
Scale

Heights shown in feet

*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*

Reinforced locations of enemy troops

Annexure-6



MAP 30

Regrouping of Indian Forces. Operations between 8 and 10 September 1965.

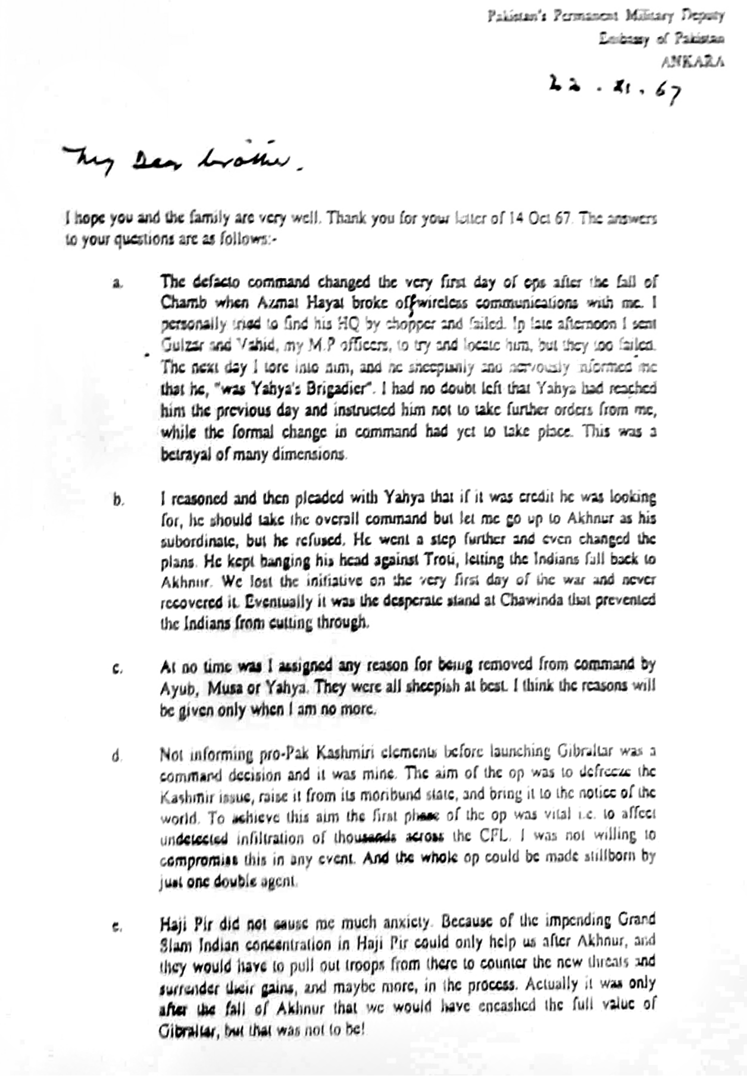
Scale

Heights shown in feet

*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*

3 Mahar
3 J&K Militia
9 Punjab
Holding the hills
HQ 191 Bde
5/8 Gurkha Rifles
6 Rajput
15 Kumaon
Two troops of 20 L
HQ 41 Mtn Bde
1/1 Gurkha Rifles
1/8 Gurkha Rifles
6 Sikh Light Infantry
8 Sect
IHK
HQ 102 Bde
9 Punjab
8 Baluch
GARH
GURA
SOHAL
Akhnur
HQ 28 Bde
2 Grenadiers
6/5 Gurkha Rifles
Sqn 20 L
102 Bde
6 Bde
6 P
15 P
13 L
13 Punjab
12 FF (R&S)
TROTI
KALITH
FATWAL
DEVIPUR
Attack by 2 Grenadiers on night 9/10 Sep
Jaurian
RIVER CHENAB
HQ 10 Div
Kilometres
Miles
Furlongs

# FACSIMILE OF
# MAJOR GENERAL AKHTAR HUSSAIN MALIK'S LETTER
# DATED 22 NOVEMBER 1967



Pakistan's Permanent Military Deputy
Embassy of Pakistan
ANKARA

22.11.67

My Dear brother.

I hope you and the family are very well. Thank you for your letter of 14 Oct 67. The answers to your questions are as follows:-

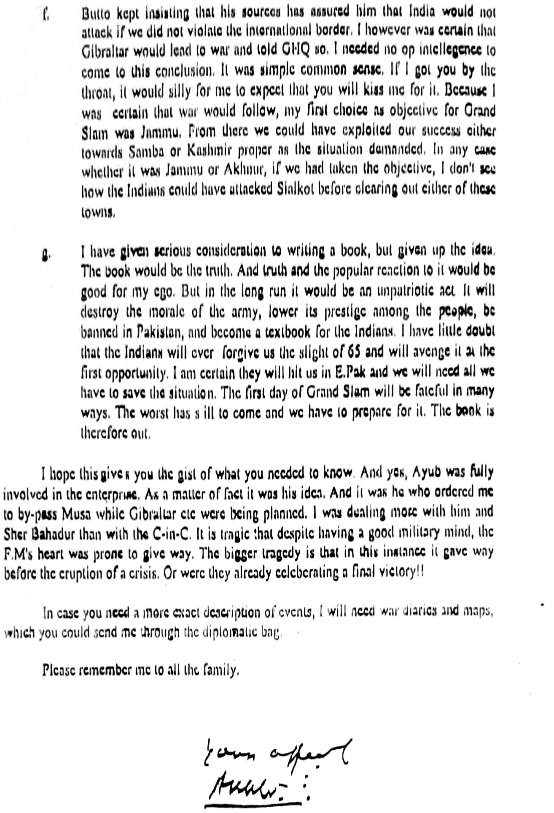
a. The defacto command changed the very first day of ops after the fall of Chamb when Azmat Hayat broke off wireless communications with me. I personally tried to find his HQ by chopper and failed. In late afternoon I sent Gulzar and Vahid, my M.P officers, to try and locate him, but they too failed. The next day I tore into him, and he sheepishly and nervously informed me that he, "was Yahya's Brigadier". I had no doubt left that Yahya had reached him the previous day and instructed him not to take further orders from me, while the formal change in command had yet to take place. This was a betrayal of many dimensions.

b. I reasoned and then pleaded with Yahya that if it was credit he was looking for, he should take the overall command but let me go up to Akhnur as his subordinate, but he refused. He went a step further and even changed the plans. He kept banging his head against Troti, letting the Indians fall back to Akhnur. We lost the initiative on the very first day of the war and never recovered it. Eventually it was the desperate stand at Chawinda that prevented the Indians from cutting through.

c. At no time was I assigned any reason for being removed from command by Ayub, Musa or Yahya. They were all sheepish at best. I think the reasons will be given only when I am no more.

d. Not informing pro-Pak Kashmiri elements before launching Gibraltar was a command decision and it was mine. The aim of the op was to defreeze the Kashmir issue, raise it from its moribund state, and bring it to the notice of the world. To achieve this aim the first phase of the op was vital i.e. to affect undetected infiltration of thousands across the CFL. I was not willing to compromise this in any event. And the whole op could be made stillborn by just one double agent.

e. Haji Pir did not cause me much anxiety. Because of the impending Grand Slam Indian concentration in Haji Pir could only help us after Akhnur, and they would have to pull out troops from there to counter the new threats and surrender their gains, and maybe more, in the process. Actually it was only after the fall of Akhnur that we would have encashed the full value of Gibraltar, but that was not to be!



f. Butto kept insisting that his sources has assured him that India would not attack if we did not violate the international border. I however was certain that Gibraltar would lead to war and told GHQ so. I needed no op intelligence to come to this conclusion. It was simple common sense. If I got you by the throat, it would silly for me to expect that you will kiss me for it. Because I was certain that war would follow, my first choice as objective for Grand Slam was Jammu. From there we could have exploited our success either towards Samba or Kashmir proper as the situation demanded. In any case whether it was Jammu or Akhnur, if we had taken the objective, I don't see how the Indians could have attacked Sialkot before clearing out either of these towns.

g. I have given serious consideration to writing a book, but given up the idea. The book would be the truth. And truth and the popular reaction to it would be good for my ego. But in the long run it would be an unpatriotic act. It will destroy the morale of the army, lower its prestige among the people, be banned in Pakistan, and become a textbook for the Indians. I have little doubt that the Indians will ever forgive us the slight of 65 and will avenge it at the first opportunity. I am certain they will hit us in E.Pak and we will need all we have to save the situation. The first day of Grand Slam will be fateful in many ways. The worst has still to come and we have to prepare for it. The book is therefore out.

I hope this gives you the gist of what you needed to know. And yes, Ayub was fully involved in the enterprise. As a matter of fact it was his idea. And it was he who ordered me to by-pass Musa while Gibraltar etc were being planned. I was dealing more with him and Sher Bahadur than with the C-in-C. It is tragic that despite having a good military mind, the F.M's heart was prone to give way. The bigger tragedy is that in this instance it gave way before the eruption of a crisis. Or were they already celebrating a final victory!!

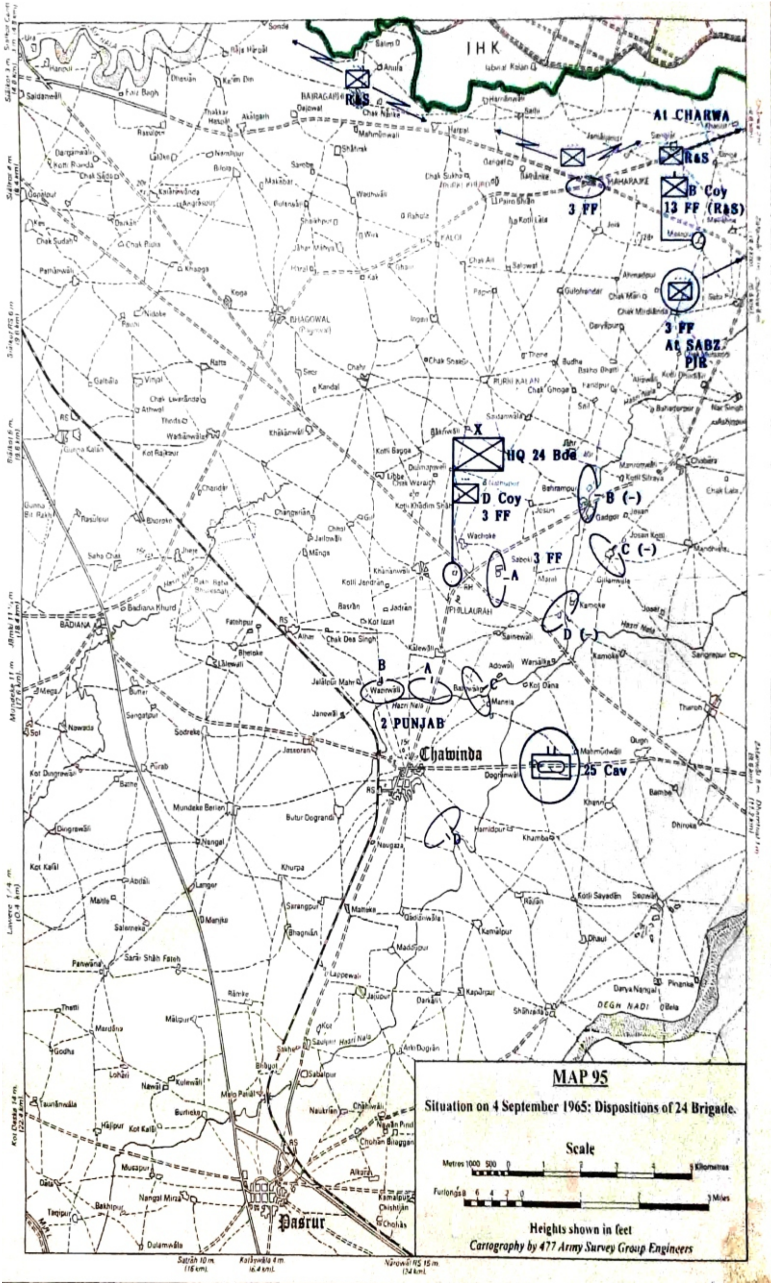
In case you need a more exact description of events, I will need war diaries and maps, which you could send me through the diplomatic bag.

Please remember me to all the family.

Yours affectl

Akhtar

**Note:** This letter was written to Lieutenant General Abdul Ali Malik, the younger brother of Major General Ahktar Hussain Malik who was the Commander of 24 Brigade in the Sialkot Sector during the 1965 War. The letter was discovered among General Abdul Ali's papers after his death by Major (Retired) Saeed Akhtar Malik, the eldest son of Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik who provided a photocopy to the Author.

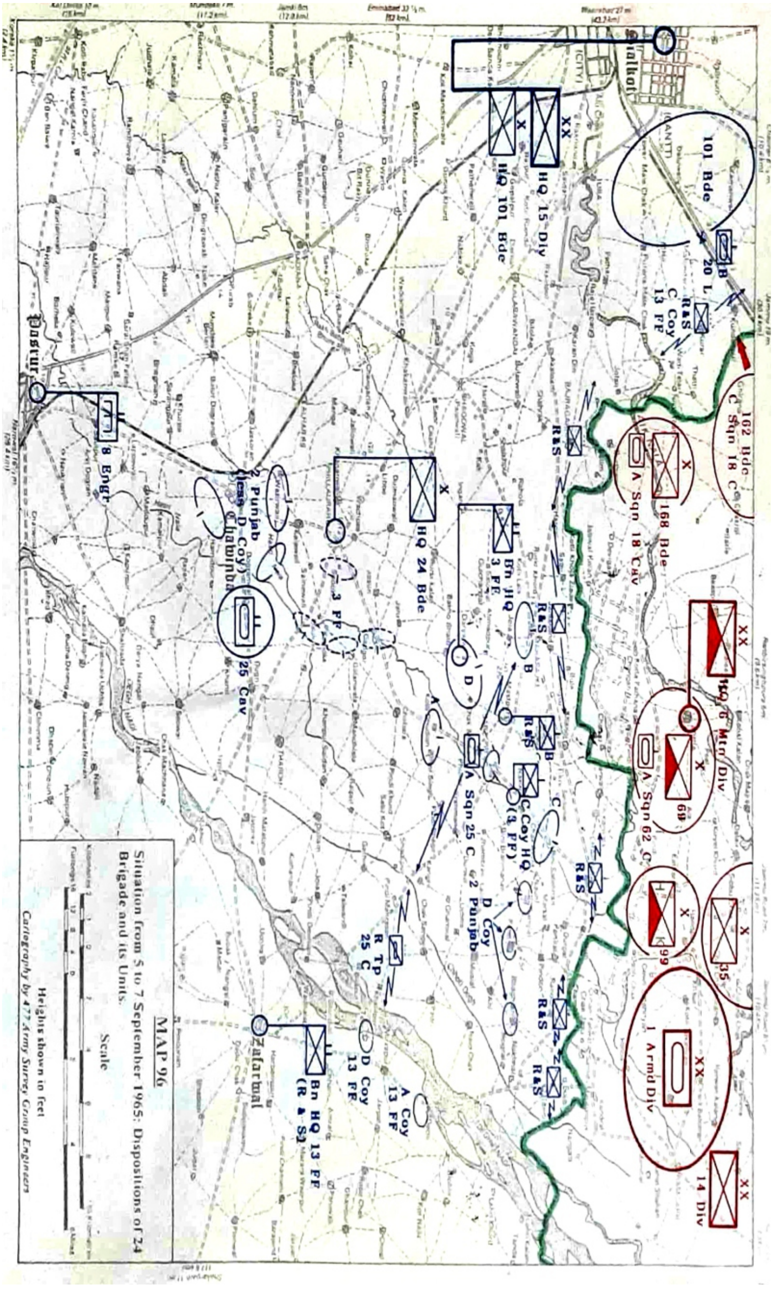


**MAP 95**

Situation on 4 September 1965: Dispositions of 24 Brigade.

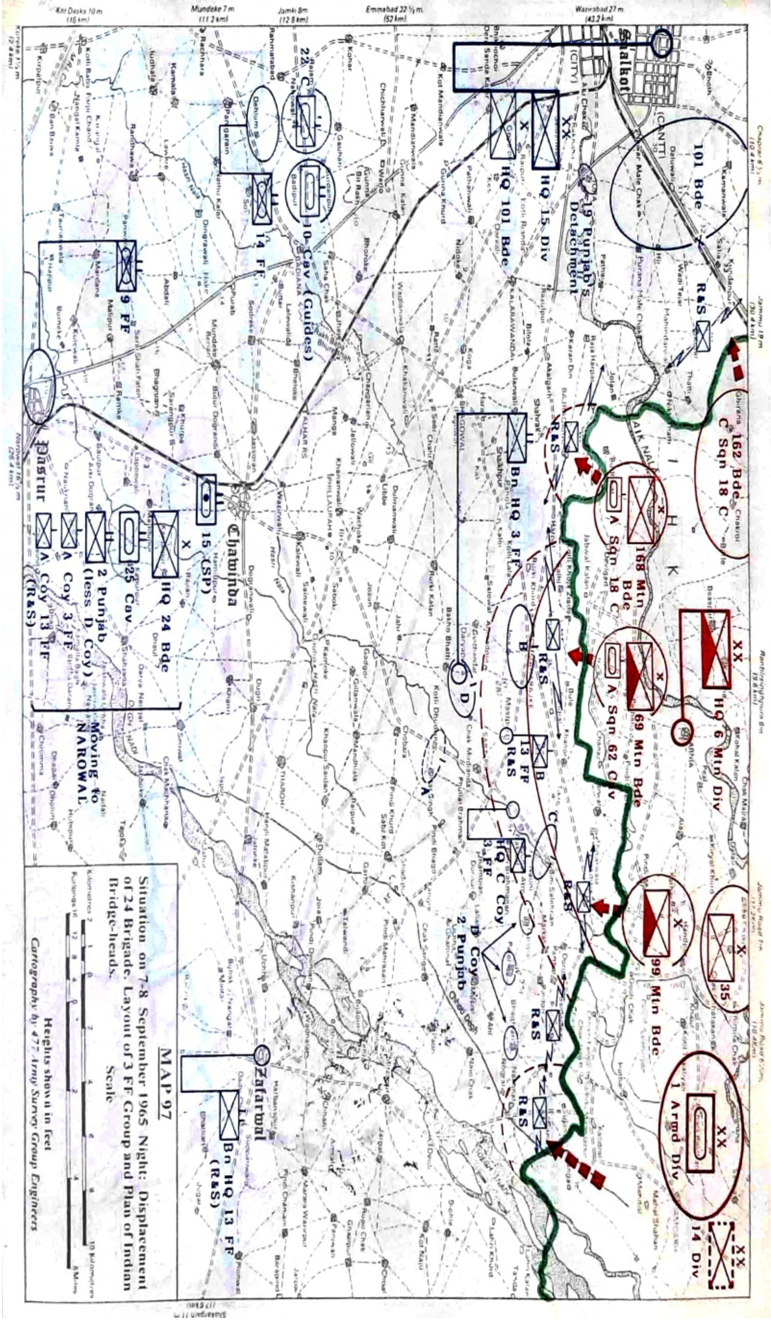
IHK
R&S
BAIRAGARH
AT CHARWA
R&S
B Coy
13 FF (R&S)
MAHARAJKE
3 FF
3 FF
AT SABZ PIR
PURBI KALAN
HQ 24 Bde
D Coy
3 FF
B (-)
C (-)
3 FF
A
PHILLAURAH
D (-)
Hasri Nala
B
A
C
2 PUNJAB
Chawinda
25 Cav
D
DEGH NADI
BHAGOWAL
BADIANA
Pasrur
Scale
Metres 1000 500 0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometres
Furlongs 8 6 4 2 0 1 2 3 Miles
Heights shown in feet
Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers

Situation from 5-7 September 1965 Annexure-9


MAP 96
Situation from 5 to 7 September 1965: Dispositions of 24 Brigade and its Units.
Scale
Heights shown in feet
Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers
Sialkot
Pasrur
Zafarwal
Chawinda
101 Bde
HQ 15 Div
HQ 101 Bde
B 20 L
R&S
C Coy 13 FF
102 Bde
C Sqn 18 C
168 Bde
A Sqn 18 Cav
HQ 6 Mtn Div
A Sqn 62 C
69
99
35
1 Armd Div
14 Div
HQ 24 Bde
Bn HQ 3 FF
3 FF
8 Engr
2 Punjab (less D Coy)
25 Cav
A Sqn 25 C
C Coy HQ (3 FF)
D Coy 2 Punjab
R Tp 25 C
D Coy 13 FF
A Coy 13 FF
Bn HQ 13 FF (R & S)

# Futile moves of 24 Bde 7 September 1965

Annexure-10



MAP 97

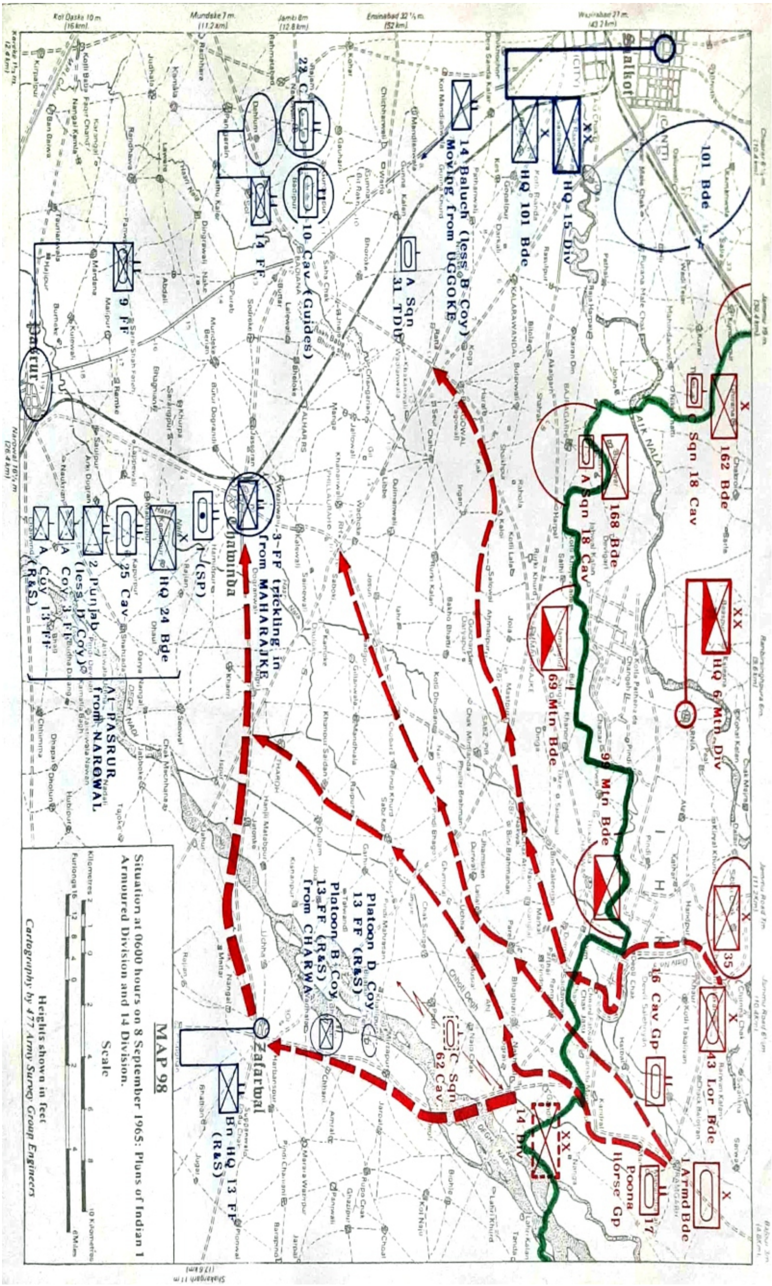
Situation on 7-8 September 1965 Night: Displacement of 24 Brigade. Layout of 3 FF Group and Plan of Indian Bridge-heads.

Heights shown in feet

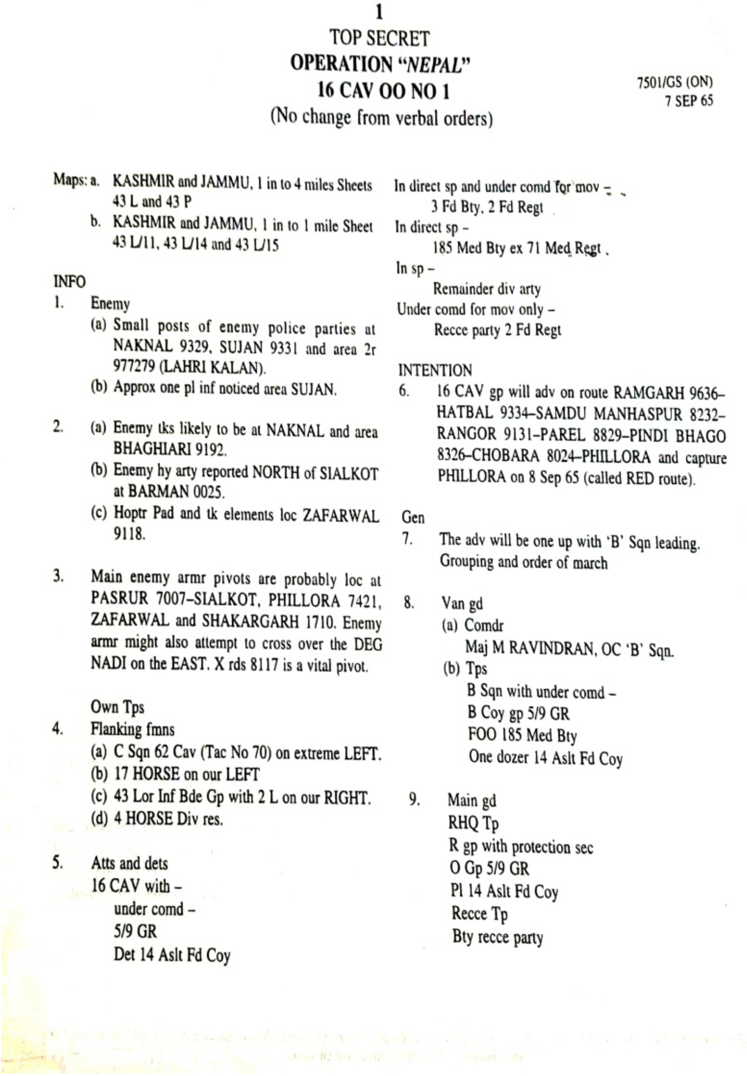
Cartography by 47 Army Survey Group Engineers

Sialkot
(CITY)
(CANTT)
101 Bde
XX
HQ 15 Div
HQ 101 Bde
19 Punjab's Detachment
R&S
22 Cav
20 Cav (Guides)
14 FF
9 FF
Pasrur
Chawinda
15 (SP)
HQ 24 Bde
25 Cav
2 Punjab (less D Coy)
A Coy 3 FF
A Coy 13 FF (R&S)
Moving to NAROWAL
Bn HQ 3 FF
13 FF R&S
HQ C Coy 3 FF
D Coy 2 Punjab
Zafarwal
Bn HQ 13 FF (R&S)
162 Bde
C Sqn 18 C
168 Mtn Bde
A Sqn 18 C
69 Mtn Bde
A Sqn 62 Cav
HQ 6 Mtn Div
99 Mtn Bde
35
1 Armd Div
14 Div
AIK NALA
J
H
K
Scale
Kilometres
Furlongs
Miles

Plan of attack of Indian Armored Division - 8th September 1965 Annexure-11


MAP 98
Situation at 0600 hours on 8 September 1965: Plans of Indian 1 Armoured Division and 14 Division.
Scale
Kilometres 2 1 0 2 4 6 8 10 Kilometres
Furlongs 16 12 8 4 0 2 4 6 Miles
Heights shown in feet
Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers
Sialkot
101 Bde
HQ 15 Div
HQ 101 Bde
14 Baluch (less B Coy) Moving from UGGOKE
A Sqn 31 TDU
24 Cav
10 Cav (Guides)
14 FF
9 FF
Pasrur
Chawinda
3 FF trickling in from MAHARAJKE
(SP)
HQ 24 Bde
25 Cav
2 Punjab (less D Coy)
A Coy 3 FF
A Coy 13 FF (R&S)
At PASRUR from NAROWAL
Platoon D Coy 13 FF (R&S)
Platoon B Coy 13 FF (R&S) from CHARWA
Zafarwal
Bn HQ 13 FF (R&S)
C Sqn 62 Cav
14 Div
1 Armd Bde
Poona Horse Gp
17
16 Cav Gp
43 Lor Bde
35
99 Mtn Bde
69 Mtn Bde
168 Bde
A Sqn 18 Cav
C Sqn 18 Cav
162 Bde
HQ 6 Mtn Div
AIK NALA
DEGH NADI
Kotli Daska 10 m (16 km)
Mundeke 7 m (11.2 km)
Jamki 8m (12.8 km)
Eminabad 32 ½ m (52 km)
Wazirabad 27 m (43.2 km)
Narowal 16½ m (26.4 km)
Shakargarh 11 m (17.6 km)

Operational orders 16 Cavalry 7th September 1965 Annexure-12-A



TOP SECRET

## OPERATION "*NEPAL*"

## 16 CAV OO NO 1

(No change from verbal orders)

7501/GS (ON)
7 SEP 65

Maps: a. KASHMIR and JAMMU, 1 in to 4 miles Sheets 43 L and 43 P
b. KASHMIR and JAMMU, 1 in to 1 mile Sheet 43 L/11, 43 L/14 and 43 L/15

INFO

1. Enemy
   (a) Small posts of enemy police parties at NAKNAL 9329, SUJAN 9331 and area 2r 977279 (LAHRI KALAN).
   (b) Approx one pl inf noticed area SUJAN.

2. (a) Enemy tks likely to be at NAKNAL and area BHAGHIARI 9192.
   (b) Enemy hy arty reported NORTH of SIALKOT at BARMAN 0025.
   (c) Hoptr Pad and tk elements loc ZAFARWAL 9118.

3. Main enemy armr pivots are probably loc at PASRUR 7007–SIALKOT, PHILLORA 7421, ZAFARWAL and SHAKARGARH 1710. Enemy armr might also attempt to cross over the DEG NADI on the EAST. X rds 8117 is a vital pivot.

Own Tps

4. Flanking fmns
   (a) C Sqn 62 Cav (Tac No 70) on extreme LEFT.
   (b) 17 HORSE on our LEFT
   (c) 43 Lor Inf Bde Gp with 2 L on our RIGHT.
   (d) 4 HORSE Div res.

5. Atts and dets
   16 CAV with –
      under comd –
      5/9 GR
      Det 14 Aslt Fd Coy
   In direct sp and under comd for mov –
      3 Fd Bty, 2 Fd Regt
   In direct sp –
      185 Med Bty ex 71 Med Regt.
   In sp –
      Remainder div arty
   Under comd for mov only –
      Recce party 2 Fd Regt

INTENTION

6. 16 CAV gp will adv on route RAMGARH 9636–HATBAL 9334–SAMDU MANHASPUR 8232–RANGOR 9131–PAREL 8829–PINDI BHAGO 8326–CHOBARA 8024–PHILLORA and capture PHILLORA on 8 Sep 65 (called RED route).

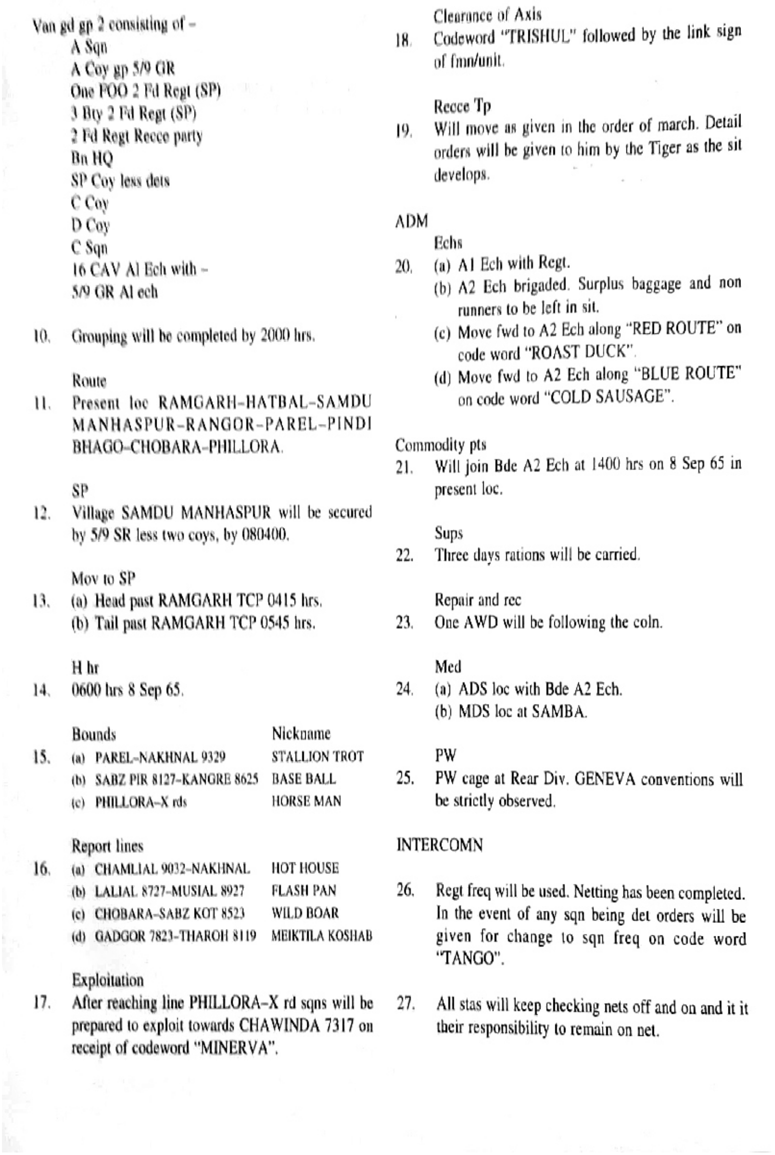
Gen

7. The adv will be one up with 'B' Sqn leading. Grouping and order of march

8. Van gd
   (a) Comdr
      Maj M RAVINDRAN, OC 'B' Sqn.
   (b) Tps
      B Sqn with under comd –
      B Coy gp 5/9 GR
      FOO 185 Med Bty
      One dozer 14 Aslt Fd Coy

9. Main gd
   RHQ Tp
   R gp with protection sec
   O Gp 5/9 GR
   Pl 14 Aslt Fd Coy
   Recce Tp
   Bty recce party

Operational orders 16 Cavalry 7th September 1965 Annexure-12-B



Van gd gp 2 consisting of –
A Sqn
A Coy gp 5/9 GR
One FOO 2 Fd Regt (SP)
3 Bty 2 Fd Regt (SP)
2 Fd Regt Recce party
Bn HQ
SP Coy less dets
C Coy
D Coy
C Sqn
16 CAV Al Ech with –
5/9 GR Al ech

10. Grouping will be completed by 2000 hrs.

Route

11. Present loc RAMGARH–HATBAL–SAMDU MANHASPUR–RANGOR–PAREL–PINDI BHAGO–CHOBARA–PHILLORA.

SP

12. Village SAMDU MANHASPUR will be secured by 5/9 SR less two coys, by 080400.

Mov to SP

13. (a) Head past RAMGARH TCP 0415 hrs.
(b) Tail past RAMGARH TCP 0545 hrs.

H hr

14. 0600 hrs 8 Sep 65.

| | Bounds | Nickname |
|---|---|---|
| 15. | (a) PAREL–NAKHNAL 9329 | STALLION TROT |
| | (b) SABZ PIR 8127–KANGRE 8625 | BASE BALL |
| | (c) PHILLORA–X rds | HORSE MAN |

| | Report lines | |
|---|---|---|
| 16. | (a) CHAMLIAL 9032–NAKHNAL | HOT HOUSE |
| | (b) LALIAL 8727–MUSIAL 8927 | FLASH PAN |
| | (c) CHOBARA–SABZ KOT 8523 | WILD BOAR |
| | (d) GADGOR 7823–THAROH 8119 | MEIKTILA KOSHAB |

Exploitation

17. After reaching line PHILLORA–X rd sqns will be prepared to exploit towards CHAWINDA 7317 on receipt of codeword "MINERVA".

Clearance of Axis

18. Codeword "TRISHUL" followed by the link sign of fmn/unit.

Recce Tp

19. Will move as given in the order of march. Detail orders will be given to him by the Tiger as the sit develops.

ADM

Echs

20. (a) A1 Ech with Regt.
(b) A2 Ech brigaded. Surplus baggage and non runners to be left in sit.
(c) Move fwd to A2 Ech along "RED ROUTE" on code word "ROAST DUCK".
(d) Move fwd to A2 Ech along "BLUE ROUTE" on code word "COLD SAUSAGE".

Commodity pts

21. Will join Bde A2 Ech at 1400 hrs on 8 Sep 65 in present loc.

Sups

22. Three days rations will be carried.

Repair and rec

23. One AWD will be following the coln.

Med

24. (a) ADS loc with Bde A2 Ech.
(b) MDS loc at SAMBA.

PW

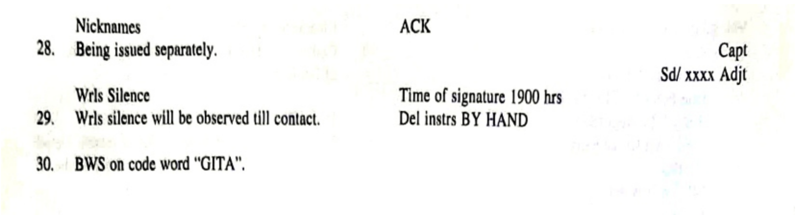
25. PW cage at Rear Div. GENEVA conventions will be strictly observed.

INTERCOMN

26. Regt freq will be used. Netting has been completed. In the event of any sqn being det orders will be given for change to sqn freq on code word "TANGO".

27. All stas will keep checking nets off and on and it it their responsibility to remain on net.

Operational orders 16 Cavalry 7th September 1965 Annexure-12-C



**Nicknames**

28. Being issued separately.

**Wrls Silence**

29. Wrls silence will be observed till contact.

30. BWS on code word "GITA".

ACK

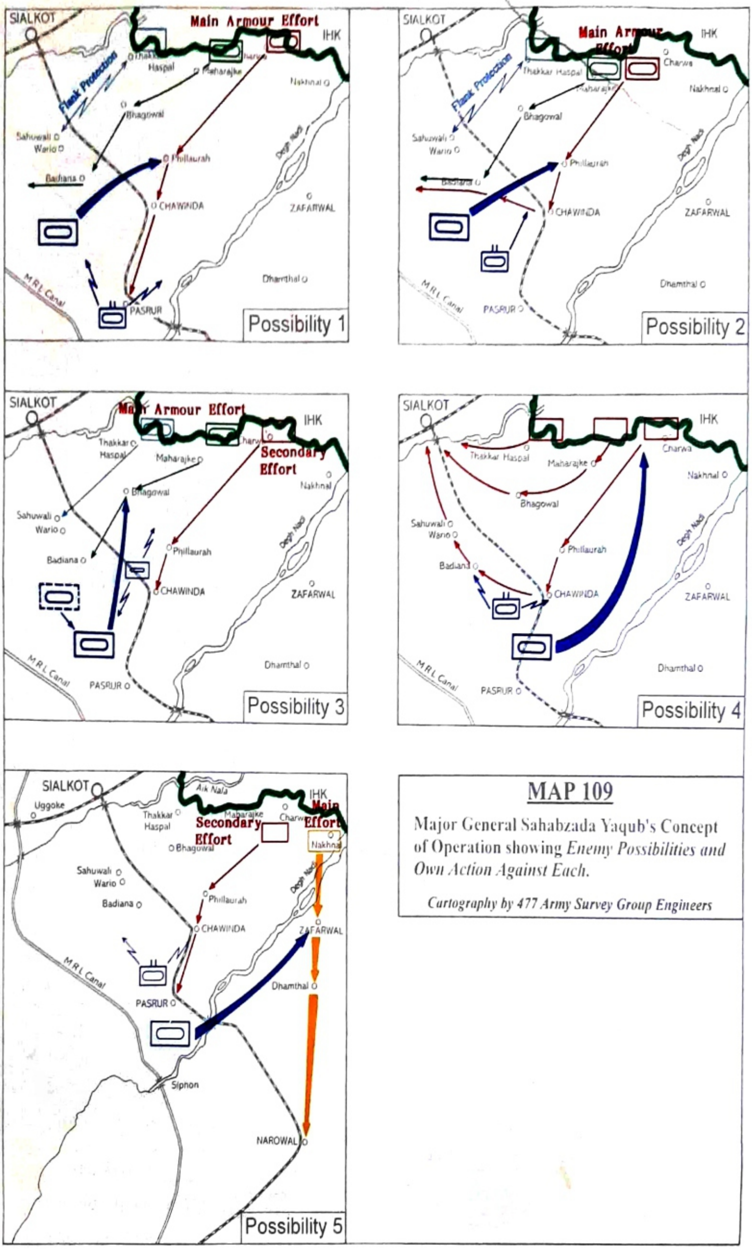
Capt

Sd/ xxxx Adjt

Time of signature 1900 hrs

Del instrs BY HAND

## Concept of Operations as envisaged by Maj Gen Yaqub Annexure-13


SIALKOT
Main Armour Effort
Secondary Effort
Main Effort
IHK
Flank Protection
Thakkar Haspal
Maharajke
Charwa
Nakhnal
Bhagowal
Sahuwali
Wario
Badiana
Phillaurah
CHAWINDA
ZAFARWAL
Degh Nadi
Dhamthal
PASRUR
M R L Canal
Aik Nala
Uggoke
Siphon
NAROWAL
Possibility 1
Possibility 2
Possibility 3
Possibility 4
Possibility 5

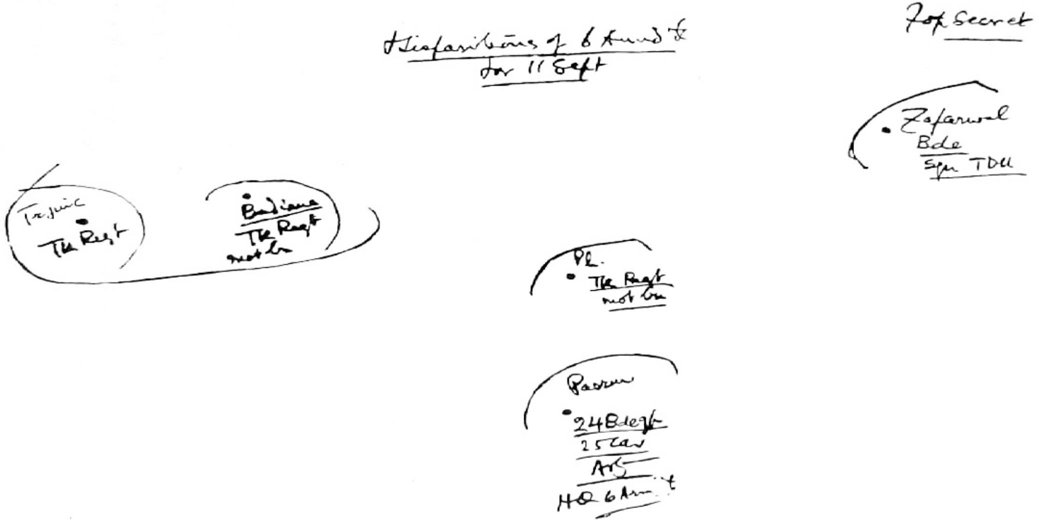
**MAP 109**

Major General Sahabzada Yaqub's Concept of Operation showing *Enemy Possibilities and Own Action Against Each.*

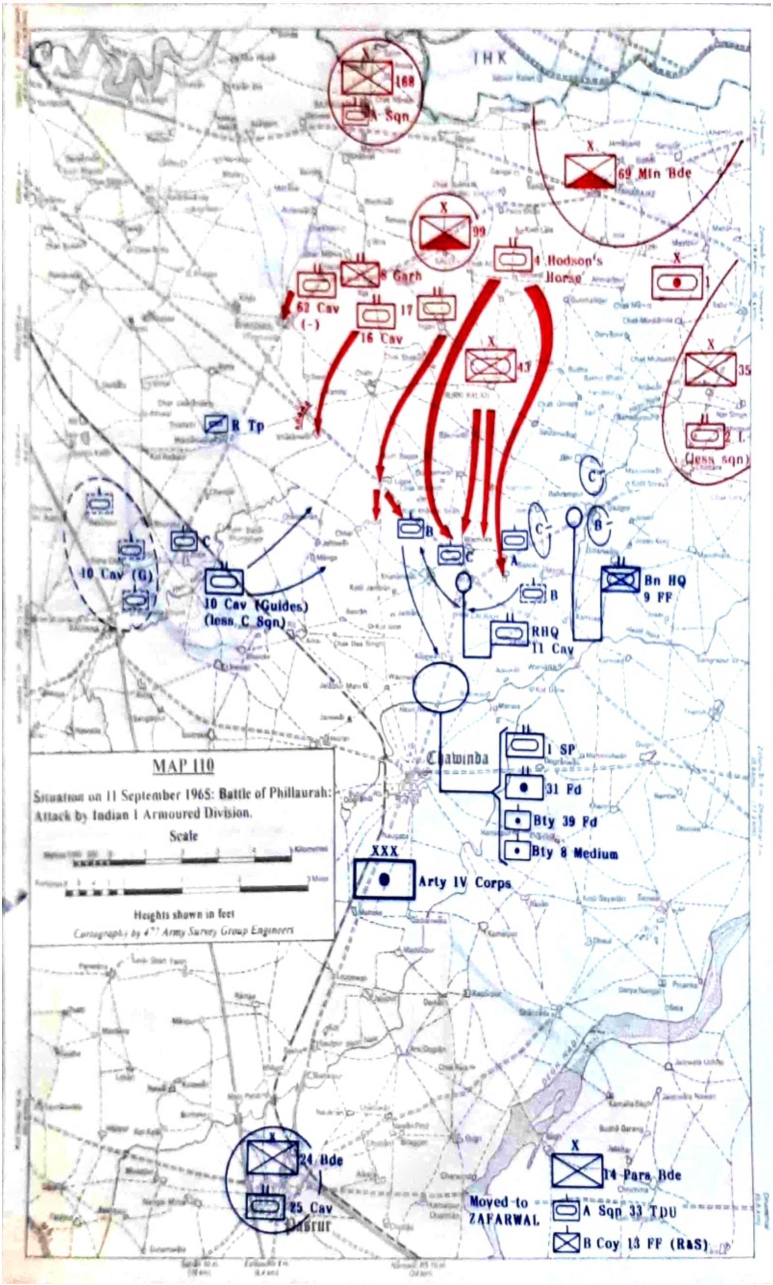
*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*

## APPENDIX 35

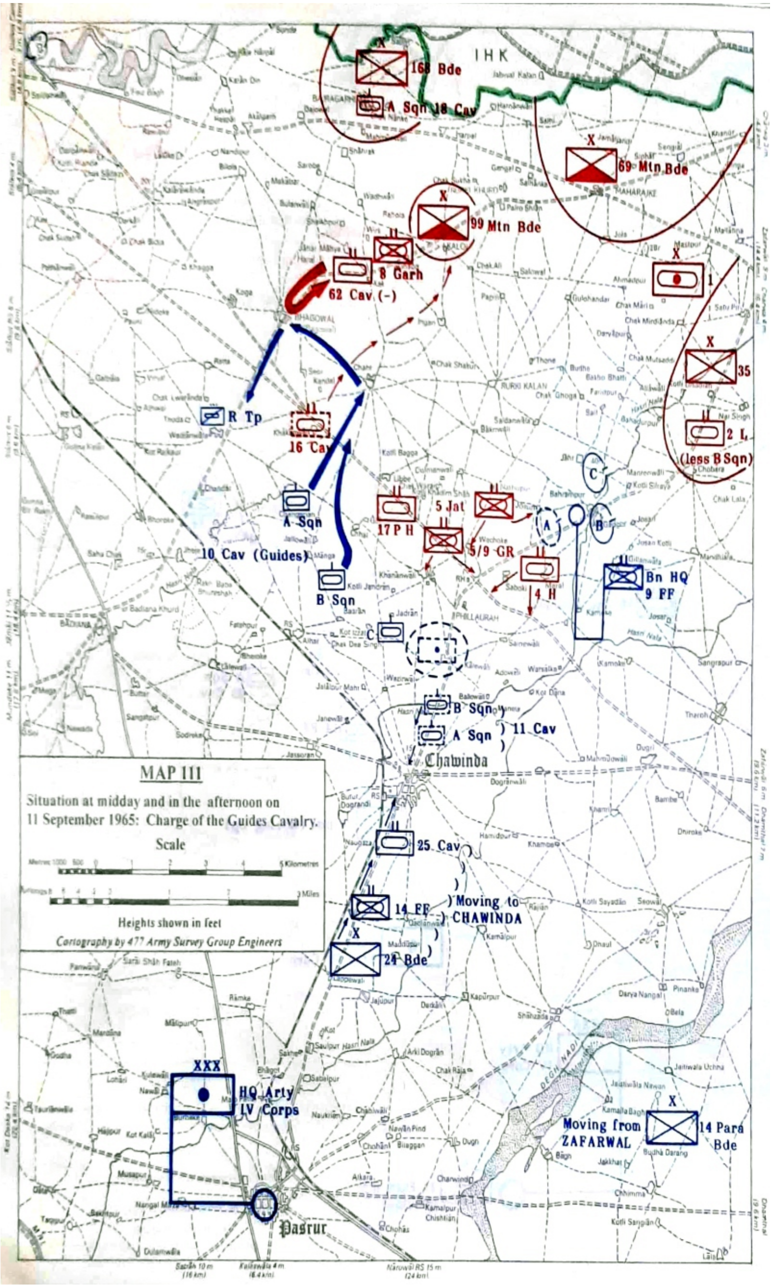
# FACSIMILE OF THE SKETCH DRAWN BY MAJOR GENERAL SAHABZADA YAQUB KHAN ACCOMPANYING HIS WRITTEN APPRECIATION DATED 9 SEPTEMBER 1965


Top Secret
Dispositions of 6 Armd Div for 11 Sept
Zafarwal
Bde
Sqn TDU
Tk Regt
Badiana
Tk Regt
not ...
Pl.
Tk Regt
not ...
Pasrur
24 Bde Gp
25 Cav
Arty
HQ 6 Armd Div

Plan of attack on Phillaurah 11th September 1965 Annexure-15


IHK
X
168
A Sqn
X
69 Mtn Bde
X
99
4 Hodson's Horse
8 Garh
62 Cav
(-)
17
16 Cav
X
43
X
1
X
35
2 L
(less sqn)
R Tp
C
C
B
10 Cav (G)
C
10 Cav (Guides)
(less C Sqn)
B
C
A
B
Bn HQ
9 FF
RHQ
11 Cav
Chawinda
1 SP
31 Fd
Bty 39 Fd
Bty 8 Medium
XXX
Arty IV Corps
MAP 110
Situation on 11 September 1965: Battle of Phillaurah: Attack by Indian 1 Armoured Division.
Scale
Kilometres
Miles
Heights shown in feet
Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers
DEGH NADI
X
24 Bde
25 Cav
Pasrur
Moved to
ZAFARWAL
X
14 Para Bde
A Sqn 33 TDU
B Coy 13 FF (R&S)

Plan of attack own guides Cavalry 11th September 1965 Annexure-16


168 Bde
A Sqn 18 Cav
IHK
69 Mtn Bde
MAHARAJKE
99 Mtn Bde
8 Garh
62 Cav (-)
BHAGOWAL
X
1
35
2 L
(less B Sqn)
R Tp
16 Cav
RURKI KALAN
A Sqn
10 Cav (Guides)
B Sqn
17 P H
5 Jat
5/9 GR
4 H
C
A
B
Bn HQ
9 FF
PHILLAURAH
C
B Sqn
A Sqn
11 Cav
Chawinda
25 Cav
Moving to
CHAWINDA
14 FF
24 Bde
XXX
HQ Arty
IV Corps
Pasrur
DEGH NADI
Moving from
ZAFARWAL
14 Para
Bde
Metres 1000 500 0 1 2 3 4 5 Kilometres
Furlongs 8 6 4 2 0 1 2 3 Miles

MAP 111

Situation at midday and in the afternoon on 11 September 1965: Charge of the Guides Cavalry.

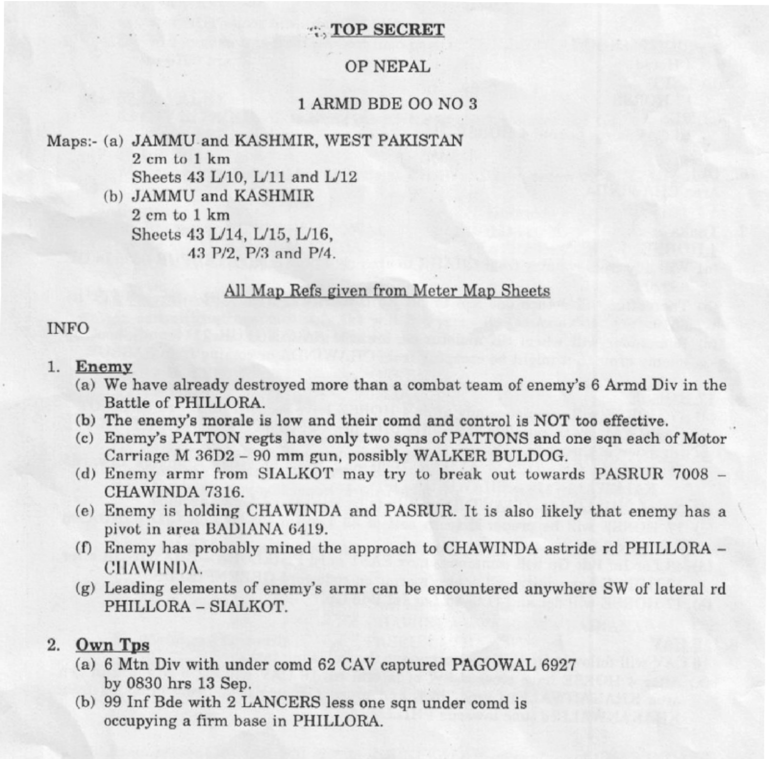
Scale

Heights shown in feet

*Cartography by 477 Army Survey Group Engineers*

Operational order 1 Armored Brigade 13th September 1965 Annexure-17-A

# FACSIMILE OF 1 (INDIAN) ARMOURED BRIGADE'S OPERATION ORDER NO 3



**TOP SECRET**

OP NEPAL

1 ARMD BDE OO NO 3

Maps:- (a) JAMMU and KASHMIR, WEST PAKISTAN
2 cm to 1 km
Sheets 43 L/10, L/11 and L/12
(b) JAMMU and KASHMIR
2 cm to 1 km
Sheets 43 L/14, L/15, L/16,
43 P/2, P/3 and P/4.

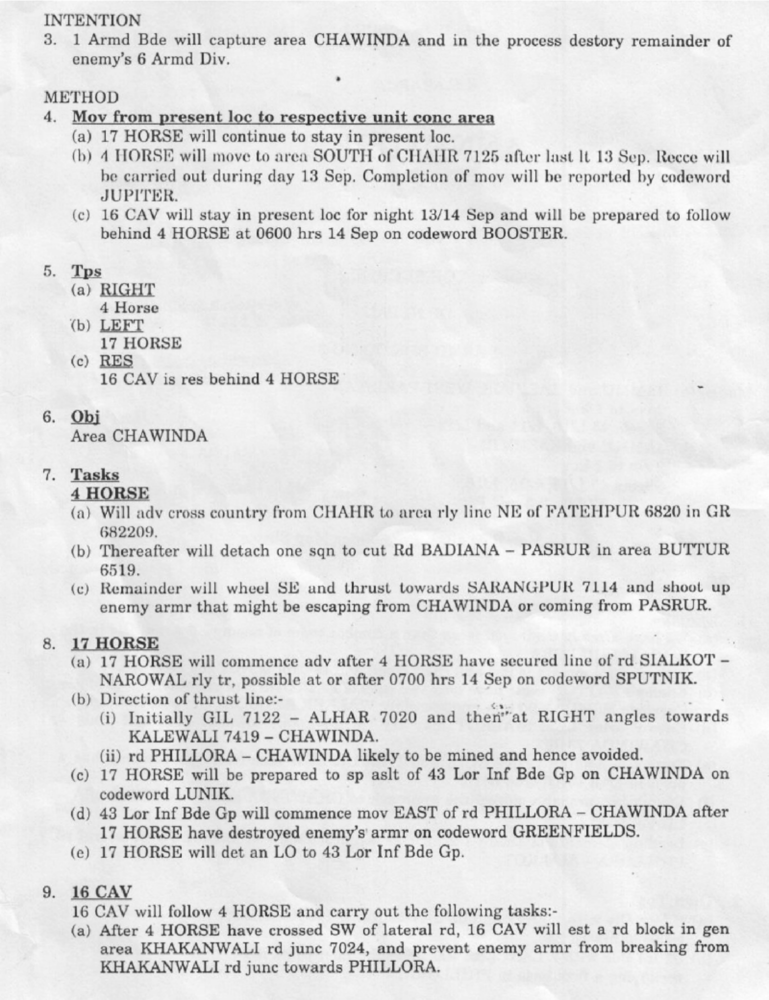
All Map Refs given from Meter Map Sheets

INFO

1. **Enemy**
   - (a) We have already destroyed more than a combat team of enemy's 6 Armd Div in the Battle of PHILLORA.
   - (b) The enemy's morale is low and their comd and control is NOT too effective.
   - (c) Enemy's PATTON regts have only two sqns of PATTONS and one sqn each of Motor Carriage M 36D2 – 90 mm gun, possibly WALKER BULDOG.
   - (d) Enemy armr from SIALKOT may try to break out towards PASRUR 7008 – CHAWINDA 7316.
   - (e) Enemy is holding CHAWINDA and PASRUR. It is also likely that enemy has a pivot in area BADIANA 6419.
   - (f) Enemy has probably mined the approach to CHAWINDA astride rd PHILLORA – CHAWINDA.
   - (g) Leading elements of enemy's armr can be encountered anywhere SW of lateral rd PHILLORA – SIALKOT.

2. **Own Tps**
   - (a) 6 Mtn Div with under comd 62 CAV captured PAGOWAL 6927 by 0830 hrs 13 Sep.
   - (b) 99 Inf Bde with 2 LANCERS less one sqn under comd is occupying a firm base in PHILLORA.

Operational order 1 Armored Brigade 13th September 1965 Annexure-17-B



INTENTION

3. 1 Armd Bde will capture area CHAWINDA and in the process destory remainder of enemy's 6 Armd Div.

METHOD

4. **Mov from present loc to respective unit conc area**
   (a) 17 HORSE will continue to stay in present loc.
   (b) 4 HORSE will move to area SOUTH of CHAHR 7125 after last lt 13 Sep. Recce will be carried out during day 13 Sep. Completion of mov will be reported by codeword JUPITER.
   (c) 16 CAV will stay in present loc for night 13/14 Sep and will be prepared to follow behind 4 HORSE at 0600 hrs 14 Sep on codeword BOOSTER.

5. **Tps**
   (a) RIGHT
   4 Horse
   (b) LEFT
   17 HORSE
   (c) RES
   16 CAV is res behind 4 HORSE

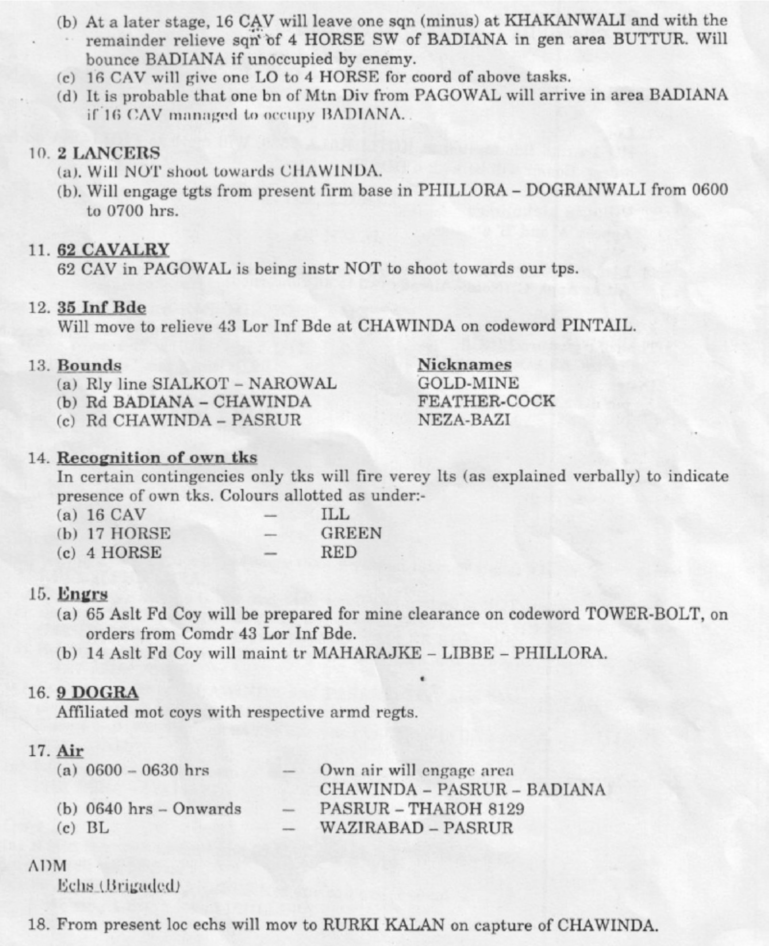
6. **Obj**
   Area CHAWINDA

7. **Tasks**
   **4 HORSE**
   (a) Will adv cross country from CHAHR to area rly line NE of FATEHPUR 6820 in GR 682209.
   (b) Thereafter will detach one sqn to cut Rd BADIANA – PASRUR in area BUTTUR 6519.
   (c) Remainder will wheel SE and thrust towards SARANGPUR 7114 and shoot up enemy armr that might be escaping from CHAWINDA or coming from PASRUR.

8. **17 HORSE**
   (a) 17 HORSE will commence adv after 4 HORSE have secured line of rd SIALKOT – NAROWAL rly tr, possible at or after 0700 hrs 14 Sep on codeword SPUTNIK.
   (b) Direction of thrust line:-
      (i) Initially GIL 7122 – ALHAR 7020 and then at RIGHT angles towards KALEWALI 7419 – CHAWINDA.
      (ii) rd PHILLORA – CHAWINDA likely to be mined and hence avoided.
   (c) 17 HORSE will be prepared to sp aslt of 43 Lor Inf Bde Gp on CHAWINDA on codeword LUNIK.
   (d) 43 Lor Inf Bde Gp will commence mov EAST of rd PHILLORA – CHAWINDA after 17 HORSE have destroyed enemy's armr on codeword GREENFIELDS.
   (e) 17 HORSE will det an LO to 43 Lor Inf Bde Gp.

9. **16 CAV**
   16 CAV will follow 4 HORSE and carry out the following tasks:-
   (a) After 4 HORSE have crossed SW of lateral rd, 16 CAV will est a rd block in gen area KHAKANWALI rd junc 7024, and prevent enemy armr from breaking from KHAKANWALI rd junc towards PHILLORA.

Operational order 1 Armored Brigade 13th September 1965 Annexure-17-C



(b) At a later stage, 16 CAV will leave one sqn (minus) at KHAKANWALI and with the remainder relieve sqn of 4 HORSE SW of BADIANA in gen area BUTTUR. Will bounce BADIANA if unoccupied by enemy.
(c) 16 CAV will give one LO to 4 HORSE for coord of above tasks.
(d) It is probable that one bn of Mtn Div from PAGOWAL will arrive in area BADIANA if 16 CAV managed to occupy BADIANA.

10. **2 LANCERS**
(a). Will NOT shoot towards CHAWINDA.
(b). Will engage tgts from present firm base in PHILLORA – DOGRANWALI from 0600 to 0700 hrs.

11. **62 CAVALRY**
62 CAV in PAGOWAL is being instr NOT to shoot towards our tps.

12. **35 Inf Bde**
Will move to relieve 43 Lor Inf Bde at CHAWINDA on codeword PINTAIL.

13.

| **Bounds** | **Nicknames** |
|---|---|
| (a) Rly line SIALKOT – NAROWAL | GOLD-MINE |
| (b) Rd BADIANA – CHAWINDA | FEATHER-COCK |
| (c) Rd CHAWINDA – PASRUR | NEZA-BAZI |

14. **Recognition of own tks**
In certain contingencies only tks will fire verey lts (as explained verbally) to indicate presence of own tks. Colours allotted as under:-
(a) 16 CAV – ILL
(b) 17 HORSE – GREEN
(c) 4 HORSE – RED

15. **Engrs**
(a) 65 Aslt Fd Coy will be prepared for mine clearance on codeword TOWER-BOLT, on orders from Comdr 43 Lor Inf Bde.
(b) 14 Aslt Fd Coy will maint tr MAHARAJKE – LIBBE – PHILLORA.

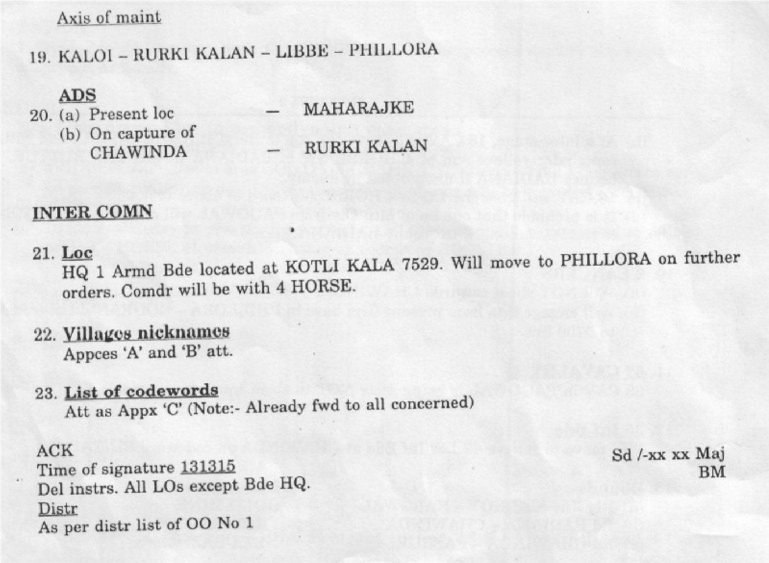
16. **9 DOGRA**
Affiliated mot coys with respective armd regts.

17. **Air**
(a) 0600 – 0630 hrs – Own air will engage area CHAWINDA – PASRUR – BADIANA
(b) 0640 hrs – Onwards – PASRUR – THAROH 8129
(c) BL – WAZIRABAD – PASRUR

ADM
Echs (Brigaded)

18. From present loc echs will mov to RURKI KALAN on capture of CHAWINDA.

Operational order 1 Armored Brigade 13th September 1965 Annexure-17-D



Axis of maint

19. KALOI – RURKI KALAN – LIBBE – PHILLORA

ADS

20. (a) Present loc – MAHARAJKE
    (b) On capture of CHAWINDA – RURKI KALAN

**INTER COMN**

21. **Loc**
HQ 1 Armd Bde located at KOTLI KALA 7529. Will move to PHILLORA on further orders. Comdr will be with 4 HORSE.

22. **Villages nicknames**
Appces 'A' and 'B' att.

23. **List of codewords**
Att as Appx 'C' (Note:- Already fwd to all concerned)

ACK
Time of signature 131315
Del instrs. All LOs except Bde HQ.
Distr
As per distr list of OO No 1

Sd /-xx xx Maj
BM

# Acknowledgement

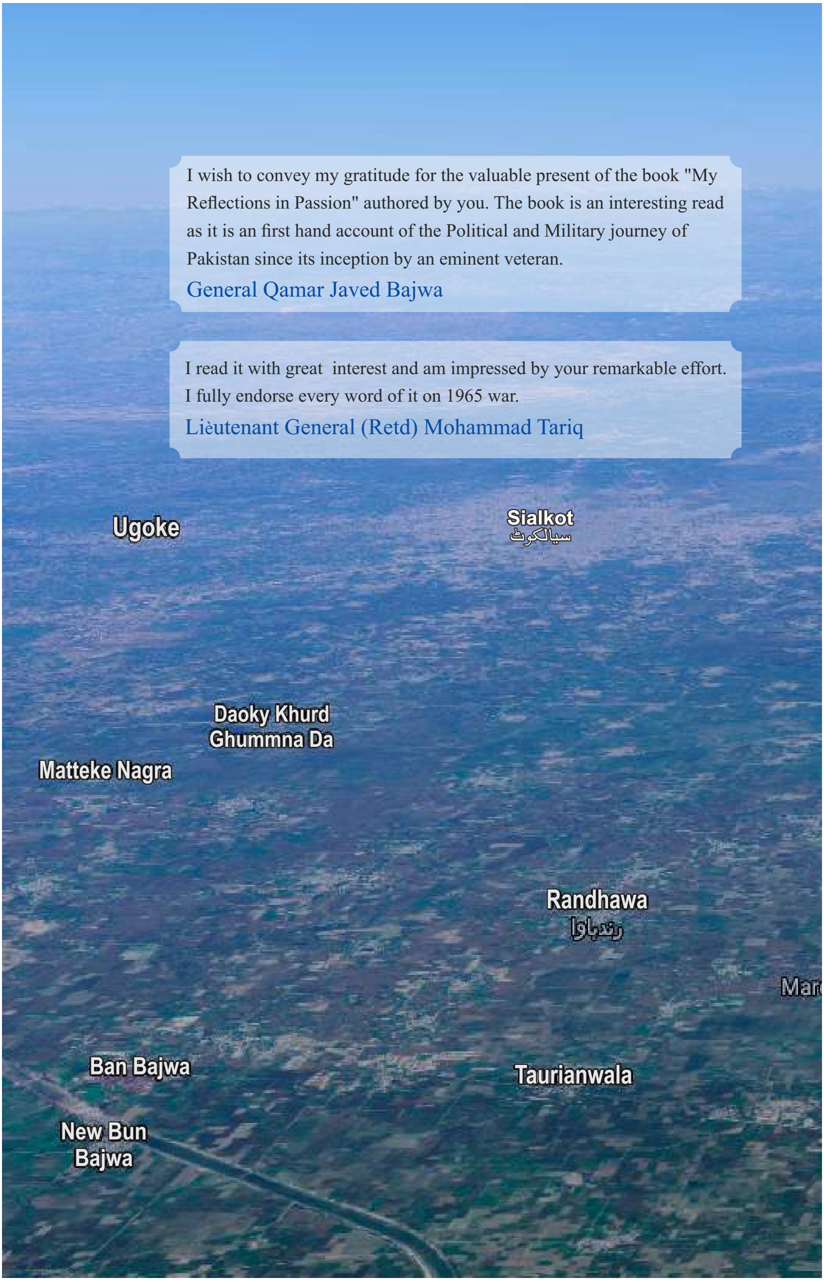
This is to put on record the advice and the in-put provided by Brig (Retd) Samson Simon Sharaf in the recomposing of Chapter 16. I am grateful to him and thank him for his help. Equally I am grateful to Shoaib Younus of DWP Group for setting the book in correct format and appreciate his effort and help.

I wish to convey my gratitude for the valuable present of the book "My Reflections in Passion" authored by you. The book is an interesting read as it is an first hand account of the Political and Military journey of Pakistan since its inception by an eminent veteran.

General Qamar Javed Bajwa

I read it with great interest and am impressed by your remarkable effort. I fully endorse every word of it on 1965 war.

Lièutenant General (Retd) Mohammad Tariq


Ugoke
Sialkot
سیالکوٹ
Daoky Khurd
Ghummna Da
Matteke Nagra
Randhawa
رندھاوا
Ban Bajwa
Taurianwala
New Bun
Bajwa